

Fall
2015

The Leading Tone

ROPA

Regional
Orchestra
Players'
Association

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

2015 ROPA Conference Edition
Grand Plaza Hotel, Toledo, OH
July 28th—30th, 2015

Attendees of the 2015 ROPA Conference in Toledo, OH, show their support for the Musicians of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

2015 ROPA Conference Report
by Karen Sandene, ROPA Secretary

The 31st Annual Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA) Conference convened last summer in Toledo, OH at the Grand Plaza Hotel. The conference provided a terrific learning opportunity for the representatives of our eighty-six member orchestras from around the nation.

We offer our sincere appreciation to conference hosts: the Toledo Symphony musicians, Local 15-286 (Toledo, OH), Toledo Local President Al Taplin, Secretary/Treasurer Emilie Sargent, ROPA Delegate Katherine Cosgrove, and numerous hard-working local volunteers. We would also like to thank Conference Coordinator/New Mexico Symphony Delegate Linda Boivin for her outstanding work assisting the ROPA Board in presenting a well-run conference.

Throughout the conference, representatives of the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) provided a wealth of knowledge. As well as being available for valuable 1-on-1 contact with delegates and speaking on several topics, SSD staff provided several hours of

training for delegates from negotiating orchestras prior to the full conference. We thank Director Jay Blumenthal and Nathan Kahn, Debbie Newmark, Chris Durham, Rochelle Skolnick, Todd Jelen and Laurence Hofmann for sharing their knowledge with the delegates.

At ROPA Conferences, we strive to utilize the knowledge of local experts in the labor field. Jackie Daugherty and Dennis Albers, faculty from the Wayne State Labor Studies Center in Detroit, addressed the topics of "Mobilizing Your Membership",

(continued on page 3)

In This Issue

Conference Report	1
2015 Conference President's Address	2
ROPA History	5
Hartford Symphony	6
Green Bay Symphony	7
2015 Conference Resolutions	8
ROPA Guiding Principles	10

The Leading Tone

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ROPA

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INFORMATION CENTER

- This newsletter will be posted online at:
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- To subscribe to the ROPA Internet Mailing List, visit
<http://groups.google.com/group/ropa-discussion>. The list is open to musicians in ROPA member orchestras, and AFM Local officers for those orchestras.

ROPA President's Remarks, 2015 ROPA Conference

by Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, ROPA President

As many of you know, in May of 2014, the Executive Director of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra announced that the Board of Directors had decided to cease operations at the end of the 2014-2015 season, their 101st season. The musicians were never consulted prior to the vote and were devastated to learn that despite a very small deficit, the board was throwing in the towel.

ROPA Delegate Steve Westergan shared with me that at the beginning of their final performance, one of the musicians was handed the mic and the following announcement was made "We are moving forward, and we will be performing in this hall next year! The musicians of this orchestra are excited about the prospect of our continued service to the Green Bay community..."

This recent closure marks another devastating agenda from within our ROPA orchestras that is devoid of vision and failure to recognize the long history of philanthropic support from within a community.

The Hartford Symphony musicians face a strategic plan whose agenda is to restructure the institution resulting in deep cuts while significant investments are being committed in other sectors of the organization.

I was alarmed to realize that while these musicians are faced with unacceptable cuts of 40%, the board has signed on to invest into Digital Institute with upfront costs of \$7 million dollars.

These facts are devastating and once again it demonstrates our need to address orchestra boards and managements who strip the livelihood of our union members through extreme austerity campaigns. Significant commitments have been made to sectors of the institution through a strategic plan while the products, the musicians, are treated as dispensable labor.

In both instances, the Green Bay Symphony and the Hartford Symphony musicians have engaged in social media campaigns and have reached out to the community for assistance to work to save their professional work and the

orchestra that they have in many cases dedicated the majority of their professional careers.

Our institutions are so rich in their histories, their artistic achievements, their community outreach and their philanthropic support. In many cases our orchestras have a history that spans seventy-five to over a hundred years, as in the case of the Green Bay Symphony.

When one looks back to the founding of our institutions we would find musicians and community members who have stepped forward determined to build and grow an orchestra within their community. An organization that would over the years developed mission statements that included a goal of artistic excellence as well as service to the community that would expand concert experiences and audiences.

When these institutions first laid their ground work, it was in the hands of visionary leaders in dialogue with musicians with a main focus of "how do we?" Unfortunately, in the agendas that have trickled into institutions like Green Bay, the "how do we" has been replaced with "we can't" or in the true lingo of the day... "it's unsustainable."

So many of the musicians I speak to at ROPA recognize that they are not only advocates for the union, but also for the art form of performing symphonic music in their community. I was very moved by former Toledo Symphony ROPA Delegate, Emilie Sargent's request for us to look back and recognize the accomplishments and sacrifices the former musicians in our orchestras have made to create the jobs we hold and the organizations we play in today.

I debated and decided that despite the challenges my orchestra faced and continue to face in New Mexico, I really wanted to share something from our history. When I first won a job in NM I heard that the founding conductor on the NM Phil was considered the first female conductor of a civic orchestra in the United States. Her story of coming to NM was typical of artists of the time. Grace Thompson Edminster arrived in NM in 1918 on a stretcher with very little anticipation from the doctors of surviving. She left two children in Ohio; the

(continued on page 4)

(Conference Report, continued from page 1)

"Building Participation Through Communication" and "Building New Union Activists". Barbara Coventry and Jerry Van Hoy of the University of Toledo discussed the Union education campaign for the Ohio Senate Bill 5 (Right to Work). Jane Slaughter, Former Editor of *Labor Notes* and also based in Detroit, spoke on "Signs of Life on a Labor Movement Under Attack". Slaughter discussed strategies implemented during the UPS and the Chicago Teachers Strikes, and living wage campaigns and fast food workers struggles across the nation.

Other guests who addressed the conference during the first day included Scott Boberg, Manager of Programs and Audience Engagement for the Toledo Museum of the Arts. Marc Folk, President of the Ohio Citizens for the Arts spoke of how the arts are playing a large role in Toledo's business expansion. He stressed the importance of making our "economic value" clear to our funders and the business community. Randy Whatley of the Cypress Media Group gave a presentation on the Logistics of Advocacy. Whatley has proven to be an invaluable resource to the Players Conferences and our orchestras.

As part of the first day's activities, delegates split into small groups with their Members-at-Large (MALs) and worked for several hours learning about issues facing orchestras in their respective MAL groups.



ROPAs President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum with ICSOM Chair Bruce Ridge.

AFM President Ray Hair led off the second day of the conference with a talk on Media Convergence and Performance Rights, as well as providing an excellent presentation on the history of the AFM. During the ROPA officer reports, ROPA



Above: Al Taplin, President, Toledo Local 15-286.
Below: Jane Slaughter, former *Labor Notes* Editor.



Vice-President Nancy Nelson spoke to the large number of new delegates to our conference and how they can take their new energies back to their orchestras. ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum's speech focused on the importance of orchestras reaching out to their communities.

Delegates and guests had several opportunities during the conference to sit in on

break-out sessions based upon interest and importance to their orchestras. This year's topics dealt with the use of Facebook/Twitter, Messaging the Successes in our Industry, Orchestra Committee Education, Reading Budgets, Right-to-Work/Union Recruitment, Building Participation through Communication, Building New Union Activists and Media Messaging.

Other items covered during the conference included updates for the Hartford and Green Bay Symphonies. Conference reports were given by Maurice Grants/RMA, Liz Johnston/OCISM, George Troia/TMA and Bruce Ridge/ICSOM. Debbie



New and returning delegates making connections.

Newmark gave a presentation on the Integrated Media Agreement. Rochelle Skolnick led delegates through an invaluable mock grievance procedure, "The Curious Case of Charles the Cellist." And looking ahead, delegates selected Phoenix, AZ as the site for the 2017 Conference.

Following this conference's elections, members of the 2015-16 ROPA Executive Board will include President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, Vice President Nancy Nelson, Secretary Karen Sandene, Treasurer Donna Loomis, Delegate-at-Large to the AFM Convention Maurice Grants, and Members-at-Large Taylor Brown, Naomi Bendorf-Frisch, Janice Galassi, Mary Anne Lemoine, John Michael Smith, Maya Stone and Steve Wade.

We look forward to our 32nd Conference in 2016 in Madison, Wisconsin!

(President's Remarks, continued from page 2)

youngest was seven months. Grace had tuberculosis and the doctors said that she might have a chance to live a few more months if she was taken out of the Midwest during a particularly bad winter.

After three months of care in a sanitarium, she recovered and vowed to pay New Mexico back for her health through her music. She moved her children out to New Mexico where she pursued a music career. It was in 1932 when she and some community leaders set forth to form an orchestra.

Everyone took great pride in the orchestra as they saw community leaders step forward and support this new and exciting endeavor. The mayor went door to door inviting people to attend the concert. There were 2,000 people in attendance. The orchestra and the conductor went on to perform for the community and became a center piece for collaboration and celebration.



Grace Thompson Edminster

When I reflect on the cultural outreach Grace so passionately believed in, it is hard to truly comprehend the innovations she planned during her early years in NM. Grace was enamored by Native American songs and was committed to sharing them across the United States. She assisted in a yearly production of Native American music that she eventually took to NY and Atlantic City in the 1930's. Community leaders were involved in the productions.

On May 19, 1940 Grace led two symphony performances underground in the San Pedro Mine for their 100th anniversary. Grace conducted orchestral works that included Fingal's Cave and in the Hall of the Mountain King from a gold, silver, and copper podium. Audience members wore Coronado costumes and 14 members of Robert Ripley's staff attended the concert. A reception was held 600 feet underground.

While in the mine, a dynamite explosion was set off and the visitors huddled in a small pit, clasping hands at the direction of the miners. She later learned that the miners considered it bad luck for a woman to enter a mine.

1,200 people, two concerts, 200 feet underground, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile into the mountain. The musicians rode a thousand feet into the mines on the ore dump train, walked another several hundred feet along an elevated incline, and reached a mammoth room where the underground concert was held.

The appointment calendar of the founder revealed that the orchestra was on the mind and tongues of the business and political leaders as well as community members constantly. Special Celebrations such as a mine anniversary concert was maybe not the most practical or safe, however it was a natural forum for bringing the community together. The Native American collaborations Grace engaged in during the 1930's were innovative for today's time and were most likely a risk during the years of the great depression. Yet they pursued their vision during a time when it would have been easy to put risky ventures on hold.

On Monday The ROPA Board engaged in some interesting dialogue about our institutions. It was noted that we have some challenges coming in the not too distant future. The typical symphony board member entering for the first time will no longer have the education component of music in their background. The appreciation of the art form based on their own experiences will be at a much lower rate. Their background of the for-profit business model may realize an increased negative sentiment towards unions.

We will have to focus a concerted energy on the new generation of board members and hopefully influence them towards a visionary path of our founding members of "how do we."

We will have to increase our connections within our communities, create partnerships and be a leader for our own musicians as we work to expand our advocacy for both our union and our art form. We shouldn't wait for a crisis to act and we shouldn't take for granted that all will be well forever. Hearing from my colleague Steve Wade in Hartford say that it only took one afternoon to tear down twenty years of relationship building is heart breaking.

Both ROPA Delegates Steve Wade and Steve Westergan are working valiantly and have poured their heart and soul into their orchestras. I ask that we all work together to help them with the support they need to bring the vision back into their orchestras.



Hartford Delegate and Executive Board Member Steve Wade

Hartford Symphony Negotiations Update / Labor Day Rally

by Steve Wade, ROPA Delegate, Hartford Symphony/ ROPA Member-at-Large

The negotiations between the management and the musicians of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra continue. In the course of over 20 meetings since January 2015 that have included SSD negotiator Nathan Kahn and federal mediator Joseph Dubin, agreement has been reached on a number of issues. The parties remain far apart, however, on the big four: the service guarantee, the absence policy, the size of the orchestra, and the use of afternoon services. Some progress has been made, but management remains committed to cutting the guarantee for the Core tier of the orchestra substantially, and has actually told us across the table that even if they had a lot of money, they would not move on the issue. The next meeting is scheduled for mid November.



Member of the Hartford Symphony

more on being a presenter and less on marketing an orchestra. The players have tried to raise awareness about the pitfalls of the situation. Certainly some in the public and the media have noted the problems, but we are unsure about how seriously the boards of the two organizations take the issue.

The musicians of the HSO remain united, and have done a number of things to show their resolve to the public and to the board of the orchestra. We have made good use of our bright red "HSO Musicians/We Make The Music" tee shirts. We wore them for certain rehearsals, including this week's dress to which board members and other guests were invited. We also wore them for a series of pop-up concerts we presented around Hartford in the last week of August. We established a Facebook page and a Twitter account earlier this year. We have tried to



Meanwhile, the HSO has begun its concert season. We are performing our second Masterworks series this week (November 5-7) under the terms of the existing contract, which expired in June 2013. An important arbitration hearing on concessionary "sunset clauses" concluded last week, and we await a decision. (The musicians made a number of concessions to help the HSO through tough times since 2008; they were called sunset clauses, meaning that they were meant to expire when the current contract ends. Management says they don't.) The NLRB has issued an Unfair Labor Practice charge against management for failure to issue individual contracts without bargaining, a unilateral change, and a second charge of direct dealing is pending.

This contract is the first one the players are negotiating with a management engaged by the HSO board under a management services contract with the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. Given the circumstances, we are being painstaking in our approach to negotiating. The arrangement presents issues. At the moment the CEO of the HSO is also the CEO of the Bushnell. Both organizations are non-profits competing for resources in the same region. Also, the Bushnell's focus seems

stay active and up to date on these sites, although that has proven to be harder during the school year and concert season. Sometimes there is just not enough time in the day for the three of us that manage our social media.

We held a very successful rally on September 9 at the State Capitol building in Hartford. First proposed by Nathan Kahn, the idea was to capitalize on the symbolism of Labor

Day. We had incredible support from the AFM, SSD, ROPA, ICSOM, and the Connecticut AFL-CIO. Six media outlets were present, and we continue to get a lot of attention because of the



AFM President Ray Hair

The Inception of ROPA: How a Dream Becomes Reality

by Rachel Cox, Historian

Ed. Note: As new orchestras and musicians join our ROPA family, an occasional refresher on the founding and mission of ROPA is helpful. This is a reposting of an article written by Rachael Cox, ROPA Historian and Delegate from the Southwest Florida Symphony.

The completion of all great undertakings, the famous adage reminds us, began as a dream. In many cases, this dream was a possible solution to a situation that needed to be addressed. The inception of ROPA, for example, was a solution to the situation many regional orchestras existed in prior to the formation of a national organization, similar to ICSOM, which provided support and information for regional orchestras.

Prior to 1976, the American Symphony Orchestra League recognized only four categories of member orchestras: Major, Metropolitan, Urban, and Community orchestras. In 1976, fourteen managers of the larger metropolitan orchestras met in Chicago to create the "Regional" orchestra category, whose budgetary considerations lay between \$500,000 and one million dollars. The increasing activity of orchestras of this size and their unique challenges necessitated a new recognition.

Nathan Kahn had witnessed this state of affairs throughout his career as a professional bassist. His first experiences dated back to the 1970s, when the AFM Symphonic Services department did not exist in its present state and when Locals would negotiate contracts for many orchestras. Kahn was a member of the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) during this decade, and he remembered the sense of isolation and the terrible experience of having to feel one's way in the metaphorical darkness while addressing negotiation issues.

The national bicentennial year marked the first time that the TPO contract was negotiated with the full participation of the orchestra committee. The TPO witnessed a brief and somewhat successful strike that year, followed by a dismal lockout in 1979. Having to address these situations in a

heavily anti-union section of the country further exacerbated this sense of isolation: The only way Kahn could conduct research for the negotiating committee was to contact colleagues in other regional orchestras to ask for advice and to examine their contracts for comparison.

Kahn then went to the next logical sources for support and information. He contacted Ted Dreher at the AFM in New York, who referred him to former ICSOM officers Stanley Dombrowski and Irv Siegal. Although all of them offered advice based on what they knew, they admittedly had little or no experience in the situations faced by orchestras the size of the Tulsa Philharmonic.

Certain issues that were not part of ICSOM-level orchestras nevertheless were germane to regional orchestras. Many of these

"The only solution was for regional orchestras to form their own association."

orchestras contained a "core orchestra," which constituted a group of musicians who were offered a basic package of services and/or compensation not offered to per-service players. This division caused resentment among the orchestra members, which naturally became salient during contract negotiations.

In 1981, Kahn left Tulsa to assume the position of principal bassist of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra (NSO). When he arrived in Nashville, he found that orchestra in the middle of a heated contract negotiation, one so volatile that the orchestra stood on the verge of a strike. This orchestra, like the TPO, contained a core orchestra and the per-service musicians, with the resultant divisiveness between the two

groups. The contract was eventually approved by a slim margin. All current NSO musicians received automatic tenure except the first-year players, who were on probation. In violation of the contract, the music director terminated the employment of several musicians, which took effect immediately. These musicians hired legal counsel and filed suit against the NSO to get their jobs back; the court decision, unfortunately, did not reinstate them. The Local, which had never had to address terminations of this sort, was at a loss as to what action to take.

In 1982, Kahn traveled to St. Louis to hear his high-school classmate, Carolyn White Buckley, perform with her colleagues in a chamber orchestra from the St. Louis Symphony. Carolyn's husband was Brad Buckley, who would later become chairperson of ICSOM. Nathan and Brad spoke about the situations in the Tulsa Philharmonic and the Nashville Symphony. Both of them came to the conclusion that many regional orchestras were experiencing exponential growth, but their administrations and the Locals were not prepared to address the concomitant issues that were created with this growth.

Kahn's first idea was to create a subgroup of ICSOM for regional orchestras so that these orchestras could learn not only from each other but also from the larger institutions. ICSOM's membership requirements, however, stipulated that member orchestras employed at least 60 musicians earning a minimum salary of \$15,000. These requirements were impossible for most regional orchestras. The only solution was for regional orchestras to form their own association. Kahn left St. Louis determined to make this undertaking a reality.

Using the World Almanac, Kahn found a listing of all major and regional orchestras in the U.S. and Canada with their business addresses. He then sent a letter addressed to the "Orchestra Committee Chairperson" and included a questionnaire that queried

(continued on page 11)

Green Bay Begins Transition With a Bittersweet Finale

by Steve Westergan, ROPA Delegate, Green Bay Symphony Orchestra

In early May of 2014, the Executive Director of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra contacted our Orchestra Committee and said that later in the day he would be announcing to the media that the Board of Directors had decided to cease operations at the end of the 2014-2015 season. He would also be announcing that our Music Director had stepped down in order to pursue other opportunities.

As you can imagine, all the members of the orchestra were quite disappointed by the Board's decision, especially since none of us – including the OC – had been consulted (we no longer had a musician on the Board). The 2014-2015 season, our 101st, included several fine concerts, presenting light classics, some hidden gems of the repertoire for brass, and a tribute to the Beatles; and throughout the season, the OC held many meetings to explore ways of sustaining the orchestra. Our efforts continue, and we remain hopeful that the orchestra will have a strong future.

Our transition began just a couple of hours before the final concert of 2014-2015. Our Executive Director had invited a number of organizations to staff tables in the lobby of our hall, in order to let members of the audience know of opportunities to hear live classical music in 2015-2016 and beyond. The musicians of the GBSO were also given a table, so we could provide information about our website and speak with people one-on-one about our plans. Close to 100 people gave us their e-mail address, so we could contact them in the future, and they were all thrilled to hear that we were working hard to keep the orchestra going. In fact, many started their conversations with us by saying how sad they were that the orchestra was dissolving, but then they became more and more upbeat and excited when we told them that, on the contrary, we were not going away and were looking forward to continue providing orchestral music to the Green Bay community.

The performance that followed these conversations was extraordinary in several respects. It was designed not just as a farewell to the GBSO but also as a celebration of the Green Bay Symphony Youth Orchestra (GBSYO) program, which will be continuing. The first half of the concert featured three professional musicians who had grown up in the Green Bay area and who had participated in the GBSYO. Each of them played a solo with the orchestra: Bartok's first rhapsody for violin, Goossens's oboe concerto, and Saint-Saëns's *Morceau de concert* for harp. All three soloists played beautifully to an appreciative and supportive audience (some of whom had known them since they were kids).

But what made the concert even more memorable – and bittersweet – was the second half, in which the GBSO was joined by about twenty members of the current Youth Symphony (the top

orchestra of the GBSYO program) in order to perform Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. When our conductor, Octavio Más-Arocas, walked onstage, he stopped midway in front of the first violin section, instead of stepping onto the podium. The audience understood why and turned their warm applause into a prolonged standing ovation for the orchestra.

When they sat down, Mr. Más-Arocas thanked them and handed the mike to our principal violist, who also thanked the audience and told them about our plans: "We are moving forward, and we will be performing in this hall next year! The musicians of this orchestra are excited about the prospect of our continued service to the Green Bay community and in supporting young talent such as these who are performing with us tonight." He also mentioned our website and encouraged people to sign up, if they hadn't already. The audience responded to his well-delivered, positive comments with enthusiastic applause.

Next, Mr. Más-Arocas provided background information about the Shostakovich symphony, pointing out that it was a very appropriate piece for the orchestra to perform in this particular concert because of its emotional intensity and the circumstances it responded to. And then he said, "I know I'll make many enemies – but I am very disappointed in all of you." He said that if the Packers were to announce that they were leaving Green Bay, there would be riots; so why weren't there riots when the announcement was made almost a year ago that the orchestra would not be continuing? Green Bay, he said, needs culture; gesturing towards the orchestra, he added, "You need this." The audience listened respectfully and politely (though it was not possible to tell how any of them felt about his comments).

The audience then listened very attentively to our performance of the Shostakovich, which Mr. Más-Arocas ended with a slower than usual last couple of pages, communicating the composer's desire to express forced joy. The response to the whole piece was a standing ovation, but what was amazing was that when Mr. Más-Arocas stepped off the podium, he said a few words to our concertmaster and then left the stage and never returned, so that the audience would clearly be applauding the orchestra; their ovation went on and on and on.

Our hope is that their warm support and deep appreciation will sustain us as we work together with them and with many others to shape a future for professionally performed orchestral music in Green Bay.

ROPA 2015 Resolutions

Adopted at the Annual Conference

Resolution N°. 1

Subject: *Supporting the musicians of the HSO in their fight to maintain fair wages and working conditions.*

Hartford Symphony Orchestra Resolution.

Whereas, The Hartford Symphony Orchestra (HSO) is the second largest orchestra in New England with a 72-year history of classical music performance; and

Whereas, The musicians of the HSO have demonstrated their willingness to give to the orchestra with many concessions and compromises in three contract re-openers and two contract extensions since the 2007-08 season; and

Whereas, The musicians of the HSO have been working without a contract since June of 2013; and

Whereas, The musicians of the HSO, hoping for a long awaited effort to raise money for the Orchestra's endowment, supported the proposed strategic alliance with the Orchestra's home performing venue, the Bushnell Center for the Performing arts in April of 2014; and

Whereas, The efforts to raise money for the long term security of the Orchestra by the Board and the new management have been postponed and redirected to a other initiatives, including digital performance; and

Whereas, The new management is proposing a contract that would dramatically reduce the service guarantee as much as 40% for the musicians of the Core Orchestra; and,

Whereas, The new management is proposing a contract that would require musicians to be available for services it refuses to guarantee will take place, in particular during weekday afternoons when many musicians must work other jobs in order to make a living wage; and

Whereas, The new management is proposing to dramatically increase the percentage of services the musicians must perform in order to maintain employment with the Orchestra; and

Whereas, The Music Director has recently signed a six year agreement with the Orchestra, and management plans to engage an assistant conductor; and

Whereas, salaries and benefits to administrative staff have increased; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA), representing 86 American Federation of Musicians (AFM) member orchestras composed of over 7000 American musicians, hereby supports the musicians of the HSO in their efforts to preserve their orchestral institution of great tradition and quality; and further, be it

Resolved, That ROPA urges the management of the HSO to agree to provide a fair and equitable agreement on wages and working conditions so that its musicians can continue to support their families and

maintain their high level of performance.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N°. 2

Subject: *Resolution applauding and celebrating the success of one of our ROPA orchestras for innovative programs supporting the value of the arts and culture in its community.*

Omaha Symphony Resolution

Whereas, That due to the ongoing development of the Omaha Symphony's award- winning education and community engagement programs; and

Whereas, They have continued to develop such programs; and

Whereas, They have encouraged and supported countless young musicians in the Omaha, Nebraska area; and

Whereas, In addition to their annual sold-out Christmas Spectacular production, Symphony, Symphony Rocks, the Movie Music series and the Masterworks Series, they have produced a highly successful and innovative Family series; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players Association hereby applauds and commends the Omaha Symphony for its creative and innovative support of, and recognition of the value of the arts and culture to the citizens of Omaha, Nebraska and its environs.

Submitted by: The ROPA Legislative Committee

Resolution N°. 3

Subject: *in Recognition and Thanks to the AFM for Wage Chart Support and Funding*

Resolution in Support of the New Wage Chart Website

Whereas, The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) produces and publishes Wage Charts which summarize the latest available information on the basic provisions contained in current collective bargaining agreements of the orchestras that are members of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA); and,

Whereas, This publication informs and educates ROPA, ICSOM and OCSM musicians and their representatives; and,

Whereas, The publication of these Wage Charts greatly enhances our ability to effectively negotiate our collective bargaining agreements; therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) recognizes and heartily thanks the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), AFM President Raymond Hair, AFM Symphonic Services Divi-

sion (SSD) Director, Jay Blumenthal, SSD Contract Administrator/Communications & Data Coordinator, Laurence Hofmann, and the representatives from the symphonic players' conferences of ROPA, ICSOM and OCSM for creating, supporting and funding of the Wage Charts website.

Submitted by: The Executive Board of ROPA

Resolution N°. 4

Subject: *Encouragement of the AFM to design a comprehensive and specialized education program to train AFM leaders with the objective of teaching students in music schools the value of unionism.*

Union Education for our Music Training Institutions Resolution.

Whereas, The Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA), understands that there is a growing need for education among musicians entering the workplace; and

Whereas, Because Anti-union campaigns have influenced national sentiment against the American labor movement; and

Whereas, ROPA recognizes that there are a number of locals of all sizes that have created successful presentations for music schools in their jurisdiction that highlight the union and the labor movement; and

Whereas, ROPA supports the democratic union objectives being sought by the AFM and its local unions; AFM locals that have presented union seminars for music students that have generated new members who are educated, interested and involved in their respective locals; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA) encourages the American Federation of Musicians to design a comprehensive and specialized program for university, conservatory, and high school students that would train all AFM field staff, local officers and player conference delegates with the objective of having many trained AFM educators to go out into universities, conservatories and other schools to aid in the education objective; and, be it further,

Resolved, That ROPA encourages the AFM and its locals to establish a dialogue with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) about a future that would include coursework about the American Federation of Musicians and the American Labor movement.

Submitted by: The Executive Board of ROPA

Resolution N°. 5

Subject: *Support for the AFM and discouraging Right-to-Work Beck Fi-Core Status.*

Resolution Rejecting Beck (Fi-Core) Status

(continued on page 9)

(Resolutions, continued from page 8)

Whereas, Membership in labor unions has been, and continues to be the greatest power of workers, through collective bargaining, to secure favorable wages, safe working conditions, and fair labor practices from employers; and

Whereas, Workers in “Right-To-Work” states (states that do not require union security agreements) have wages that are 3%-17% lower than workers in free-bargaining states [1.]; and,

Whereas, Workers in right-to-work states enjoy lesser health care benefits and are less likely to receive pension benefits through their employers than workers in free-bargaining states; and,

Whereas, Workplace fatalities are 54.4 percent [2.] higher in right-to-work states than in free-bargaining states; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the membership of ROPA deplores the efforts of any entity that, by promoting right-to-work or Beck (Fi-Core) status, seeks to undermine the power of labor unions to negotiate for the benefit of all workers; and, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the membership of the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) reaffirms its support for the AFM in promoting the value and benefits of union membership, and supports its efforts and actions to expand union membership; and, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That it is the sense of this 31st ROPA Conference, that workers who chose right-to-work or Beck Fi-Core status, do inadvertently undermine the power of labor unions and reduce the negotiating power of their co-workers; and further, be it,

Resolved, That ROPA encourages all workers to join the union.

[1.] [according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Economic Policy Institute, and the AFL-CIO]

[2.] [<http://www.aflcio.org/Legislation-and-Politics/State-Legislative-Battles/Ongoing-State-Legislative-Attacks/Right-to-Work>]

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N°. 6

Subject: *Resolution commending Ohio State Legislature and the Ohio Citizens for the Arts for fiscal support of, and recognition of the value of the arts and culture to the residents of the State of Ohio.*

Ohio State Legislature and the Ohio Citizens for the Arts Resolution

Whereas, The Ohio State Legislature has recommended an increase in funding for the arts and culture through the release of the state budget recommendation for the fiscal years 2016 and 2017; and

Whereas, This budget increases the Ohio Arts Council's General Revenue Fund appropriations from \$11,349,204 in 2015 to \$11,972,050 in 2016 (a 5.5% increase) and to \$12,472,050 in 2017 (a 4.4% increase over 2016); and

Whereas, the budget proposes increasing the Ohio Arts Council's subsidy (grant-making) line item by 5.2% from \$9,700,000 in fiscal year 2015 to \$10,200,000 in fiscal year 2016, and further increases to \$10,700,000 in 2017, an increase of 4.9% from fiscal year 2016; and

Whereas, The budget proposals are a substantial investment in the arts and culture of the State of Ohio through the Ohio Arts Council; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) hereby congratulates and highly commends The Ohio State Legislature and The Ohio Citizens for the Arts for their grassroots efforts in support of, and recognition of the value of the arts and culture to the residents of the State of Ohio.

Submitted by: The ROPA Legislative Committee

Resolution N°. 7

Subject: *Resolution commending the U.S. Senate for its recognition of the importance of, and support for arts education.*

Resolution Commending the U.S. Senate's Support of the Every Child Achieves Act

Whereas, The law, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), expired in 2007; and,

Whereas, The United States Senate has not considered K-12 education legislation on the Senate floor since 2001; and,

Whereas, The Senate just passed the Every Child Achieves Act by a vote of 81-17; and

Whereas, This Senate bill contains 11 arts-friendly provisions, and retains the arts as a core academic subject; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA), a players conference of the American Federation of Musicians, hereby moves to heartily commend the U.S. Senate for its recognition of the importance of, and support of the Every Child Achieves Act and inclusion of the provisions in it that support arts education for all students in K-12; and further, be it,

Resolved, That ROPA commends all American schools and educators who participate in Every Child Achieves, acknowledging their support of student achievement, in particular as it applies to arts education.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N°. 8

Subject: *Encouragement of orchestras to classify musicians as employees, as required and defined by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Department of Labor, rather than misclassifying them as independent contractors.*

Orchestral Musicians Employee Status Resolution

Whereas, According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), an individual is an independent contractor only

if “the payer has the right to control or direct only the result of the work and not what will be done and how it will be done”; and,

Whereas, The earnings of a person who is working as an independent contractor are subject to Self-Employment Tax (tax paid only by the independent contractor); and,

Whereas, if you are an independent contractor, you are self-employed; and,

Whereas, The IRS has stated to employers that “You are not an [independent contractor](#) [1.] “if you perform services that can be controlled by an employer (what will be done and how it will be done). This applies even if you are given freedom of action. What matters is that the employer has the legal right to control the details of how the services are performed”; and,

Whereas, the Department of Labor has recently issued [guidelines](#) [2.] in response to a growing number of misclassification complaints; and,

Whereas, Orchestral employers have the legal right to control the details of how services are performed; therefore, be it,

Resolved, That orchestral musicians, whether in opera, ballet, symphony, or chamber orchestras, are not independent contractors as defined by the IRS and the United States Department of Labor (USDOL); and, be it,

Resolved, That these orchestral musicians are employees as defined by the IRS and the USDOL; and, be it, further,

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA) and its 86 orchestras with over 7,000 members believe that American orchestral employers should cease misclassifying orchestral musicians as independent contractors and give them all the legal rights and privileges associated with employee status.

[1.] <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Independent-Contractor-Defined>

[2.] [http://www.dol.gov/whd/workers/Misclassification/AI-2015_1.htm]

Submitted by: The ROPA Legislative Committee

ROPA Guiding Principles

(a joint project of the ROPA Executive Board and ROPA Delegates)

What is the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA)?

- Professional orchestra musicians of large and medium-sized budgets with AFM contracts;
- Service organizations networking with over 5,000 musicians and 85 orchestras;
- Representatives of Regional Symphony Musicians at International/National forums.

Who does ROPA serve?

- ROPA rank and file musicians;
- Future musicians by protecting today's jobs;
- All orchestras. What affects one affects all;
- The American Federation of Musicians;
- The communities our orchestras serve;
- Elected representatives—Delegates and Orchestra Committees.

Why does ROPA exist?

- To give knowledge and tools to union orchestras' musicians and to assist in establishing fair working conditions;
- To educate the membership about industry standards, labor law, procedures and practices;
- To empower and enable our colleagues to better their lives in their workplace;
- To communicate during a time when labor is being dismantled in our country.



ROPA President Emerita Barbara Zmich

Other important principles identified:

- ROPA is a place for our member orchestras to turn to for support;
- ROPA establishes a forum for our member orchestras to discuss concerns and to educate orchestras on current trends and solutions;
- ROPA provides assistance for orchestras in crisis with advice and contact information;
- ROPA works to create fair collective bargaining agreements, fair working conditions and fair compensation.

What are the important defining roles the ROPA Executive Board performs in the organization?

- Assist orchestras in need and identify resources for the issue at hand;

- Build relationships to develop industry contacts to provide sound advice;
- Provide professional musicians of ROPA with labor education and strengthen networking;
- Collect regional orchestra data for the industry;
- Strengthen rights and working conditions of our member musicians;
- Educate our membership on what is possible and how other musicians have arrived where they are;
- Work to bring our constituents together: AFM, Players Conferences, Locals, Orchestra Committees, and Musicians.



The 2015 ROPA Executive Board

What are the crucial components ROPA utilizes to accomplish its goals?

- Information sharing with orchestra to orchestra, musician to musician and person to person;
- The information is shared through website, emails, Facebook, telephone calls, conferences and newsletters;
- Work to create an atmosphere within each ROPA Orchestra of concern and commitment;
- Create awareness of issues through Delegate communicating to the ROPA Executive Board.



ROPA Secretary Karen Sandene

(continued on page 11)

(ROPA Guiding Principles, continued from page 10)

What are the results of the work of ROPA?

- Inclusion in a labor community;
- Better professional lives and contracts than we otherwise had;
- Solidarity and support;
- Greater awareness of management tactics;
- Knowledge of what works and what doesn't work;
- Education of membership;
- Orchestra profiles: wage and scale charts, orchestra reports.



ROPA Delegates, AFM Symphonic Services Division Staff and International Executive Board members gather for conversation.

What are the Values of ROPA?

- Unity
- Fairness
- Democracy in work place
- Education
- Shared Sacrifice
- We are one with all labor
- What impacts one, impacts all
- Collective action to find solutions
- Identify problems—Identify Successes



(The Inception of ROPA, continued from page 6)

orchestras about the effectiveness of a Regional Orchestras Players' Association.

The response from the musicians was excellent and extremely positive. A supportive call from Lew Waldeck, the first full-time administrator of the AFM's Symphony Department, helped move the endeavor to the next step.

What started as a concept, or dream, came to fruition when Lew Waldeck organized the first Regional Orchestra Players' Association in Columbus, Ohio in 1984. Representatives from thirteen regional orchestras attended the convention at their own expense. These orchestras became the charter members of ROPA.

The rest, as they say, is history.



Wishing Nathan Kahn a Happy Birthday at the 31st Annual ROPA Conference in Toledo.

(Hartford, continued from page 5)

awareness we raised and the commitment we showed that day.

The musicians of the HSO have a lot of experiences in labor issues in their past, and that fact has helped us in crafting a message and ways to present it. Our ROPA membership has proven to be invaluable. The conferences over the last few years have been outstanding, the leadership has been extraordinary, and the heartfelt support of the delegates has been nothing short of moving. I have often said to players in my orchestra that we are our own best resource, and that has never been more the case. ROPA offers ideas and networking that have been very important to us in Hartford. Perhaps even more importantly, ROPA shows a committed professional presence to orchestra managements and boards, to other labor organizations, and to the public at large. The musicians of the Hartford Symphony thank you.

ropaweb.org

ROPA

Regional
Orchestra
Players'
Association

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

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ROPA Member Orchestras

Full Members

Akron Symphony Orchestra
Albany Symphony
Allentown Symphony
Ann Arbor Symphony
Arizona Opera Orchestra
Atlanta Ballet Orchestra
Atlanta Opera Orchestra
Austin Symphony Orchestra
Boulder Philharmonic
California Philharmonic
California Symphony Orchestra
Canton Symphony Orchestra
Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Orch.
Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra
Dallas Opera Orchestra
Dayton Philharmonic
Delaware Symphony Orchestra
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra
East Texas Symphony Orchestra
El Paso Symphony
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
Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
Lansing Symphony Orchestra
Las Vegas Philharmonic
Lexington Philharmonic
Long Beach Symphony Orchestra
Los Angeles Opera Orchestra
Madison Symphony Orchestra
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
Santa Barbara Symphony
Santa Rosa Symphony
Sarasota Orchestra
Shreveport Symphony Orchestra
South Bend Symphony
Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra
Southwest Michigan Symphony 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

Associate Members

Binghamton Philharmonic
Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra
Flint Symphony Orchestra
Glimmerglass Opera Orchestra
Green Bay Symphony Orchestra
Hudson Valley Philharmonic
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra
Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra
Pittsburgh Ballet Orchestra
Tri-Cities Opera Orchestra
Tulsa Opera Orchestra