

ROPA

Regional	
Orchestra	
Players	
Association	

A Conference of the American Federation of Musicians, AFL — CIO



**The Regional Orchestra
Players' Association
Thirtieth Anniversary
1984-2014**
by
Rachel Cox

The purpose of ROPA shall be to promote the interests of its Member Orchestras and their musicians, both full-time and part-time, to enhance communications among these orchestras and with the Federation, its Locals and its Conferences, and to pursue any other activities conducive to the general welfare and artistic well-being of its members, as a Conference of and in accordance with the Bylaws of the Federation.

--Article II, ROPA Bylaws

Preface

The history and formation of musicians' unions in the United States has reflected the need to continuously provide working musicians with such basic professional necessities as living wages and decent working conditions. The concept of coming together to accomplish a common goal is as ingrained in the American psyche as the image of the sole individual standing alone for a principle while valiantly buffeting the storms of opposition. Combining the efforts of many, however, has proven to have a greater impact on a situation.

During the nineteenth century, musicians led a precarious existence as they struggled to make a living, performing in orchestras for minstrel shows and in theater pits, as well as for picnics, churches, grange halls, dance halls, and parades. Working conditions were abominable by today's standards and employment was unreliable.

Musicians thus came together during the mid-nineteenth century to help each other and to improve their professional circumstances. They formed Mutual Aid Societies, which provided members with loans, financial assistance during illness or extended periods of unemployment, and death benefits. Some of these organizations evolved into unions benefiting their constituencies. Autonomous musicians' unions formed in major U.S. cities, which often precipitated competition between the locals over certain territories.

In 1886, delegates from fifteen protective unions formed the National League of Musicians (NLM) to address the mutual concerns of musicians and to bring some cohesiveness to the many autonomous groups. The growth of the NLM was quite rapid. The price of encouraging groups to affiliate, however, was to allow the locals control over their own membership practices. Competition among the locals and a lack of authority on the national level, however, diluted any influence or legitimacy that the NLM could wield.

A year later, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Knights of Labor (KOL) extended an invitation for the NLM to affiliate with the labor movement, an invitation that sparked a debate within the organization as to its ideology and purpose. Diametrically opposed interests within the NLM—those who wanted the NLM to be known as an artists' organization and the others who believed that forming a union was a necessary step for advancing the cause of working musicians—undermined this endeavor. The NLM did not affiliate with either camp.

(The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor was the largest labor federation of constituent unions in the nineteenth century. The KOL was notable for its reform agenda that included such enlightened ideas as equal rights for women and the eradication of the wage system. The organization set an unprecedented success at organizing unskilled workers, women, and African Americans on an equal basis as skilled white males, a record unsurpassed until the 1930s. The KOL endorsed boycotts rather than strikes to combat difficult managements. The AFL, however, restricted its membership to skilled workers and utilized the strike as labor's most power weapon against intransigent managements.)

The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) was organized in 1896 when pro-union supporters within the NLM gathered together at the invitation of the AFL President Samuel Gompers to charter a musicians' trade union. A majority of the delegates voted to form the AFM, which represented 3,000 musicians across the nation. The first resolution of the AFM was "That any musician who receives pay for his musical services, shall be considered a professional musician." The AFM was one of the first labor unions to affiliate with the AFL (which merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, or CIO, in 1955) and became the largest union to represent artists and entertainers in the world. Within the first decade of its inception, the AFM was serving both the U.S. and Canada, had organized 424 Locals, and represented 45,000 musicians throughout North America.

With the advent of the twentieth century, technological innovations changed both the face of the entertainment industry and the world of live performances. The birth of talking pictures during the 1920s reduced the number of orchestras in movie theaters that previously existed. Within three years after the release of *The Jazz Singer* in 1927, it was estimated that about 22,000 theater jobs for musicians who had accompanied silent movies had disappeared, while only a few hundred jobs for musicians performing on soundtracks were created by the new technology. Radio broadcasting of musical performances and phonograph recording work also created new challenges. James Caesar Petrillo, president of the AFM from 1940-58, sought to compensate the thousands of musicians who had lost work because of the recording industry. After two national strikes against radio broadcasters, national recording and motion picture agreements were negotiated. Due to his efforts on behalf of musicians, the AFM and the recording companies created the Recording and Transcription Funds, which was renamed the Recording Industries Music Performance Trust Funds. This entity promotes music appreciation and education via sponsorship of free public performances throughout the U.S. and Canada. In 1959, in negotiations with the record industry, the American Federation of

Musicians' and Employers' Pension Fund was established. Adopted October 2, 1959, it was amended and restated February 13, 1992.

In the symphonic world, most musicians in U.S. symphony orchestras were employed no more than six months a year and were paid a salary of about \$4,000, barely providing a living wage. Job security was tenuous and dismissals were often immediate and arbitrary. No orchestra in the U.S., outside of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, could participate directly in the negotiation of its own contract. Orchestras could not approve the contracts negotiated for them by union representatives who were often not informed of the situations and possibly apathetic to the outcomes. Agreements were often concluded which incorporated minimal salary increases and improvements in working conditions. Furthermore, no orchestra could hire its own attorney to participate in the contract negotiations.

In 1962, the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) was established in Chicago and Cleveland by delegates from the U.S. and Canadian orchestras. ICSOM was dedicated to "the promotion of a better and more rewarding livelihood for the skilled orchestral performer and to the enrichment of the cultural life of our society." The AFM granted ICSOM official conference status in 1969.

The formation of ICSOM led the way to dramatic improvements for musicians in the major symphony orchestras. Most ICSOM orchestras now enjoy year-round seasons and substantial salaries, pensions, and insurance benefits. Contract provisions prevent discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, and union affiliation. Musicians may form orchestra committees, elect their own officers, and conduct their own affairs. Orchestras have representation at the bargaining table and may select their own legal counsel. In 1983, contract ratification rights became part of the national union bylaws.

The formation of ICSOM also generated more informed communication and concern among member orchestras. An ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund was established in 1965 and the AFM Symphony-Opera Strike Fund was established in 1970 to aid musicians in strike or lock-out situations. A conductor evaluation program was instituted in 1967 to provide musician evaluations of conductors throughout the world. Since 1968, ICSOM has retained its own legal counsel for advice on the national level and to service orchestras at the local level. ICSOM has had the good fortune to have retained the services of such distinguished attorneys as I. Philip Sipser, Leonard Leibowitz, and Liza Hirsch DuBrul Medina. A full-time AFM Symphony Department (now the Symphonic Services Division) was initiated in 1982 to address the needs of musicians in the major symphony orchestras. Lew Waldeck (1935-2004)

served as the first full-time administrator of this department, serving in this capacity until 1994.

Other conferences were recognized by the AFM representing the disparate constituencies within the union. In 1975 the AFM recognized the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) to represent orchestral musicians within the union. In 1982, the AFM recognized the International Recording Musicians' Association (RMA) to represent recording musicians within the union. The Theatre Musicians' Association, which represents musicians who perform in musical theater orchestras in the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico, was formed in 1995.

At this time, the American Symphony Orchestra League recognized only four categories of member orchestras: Major, Metropolitan, Urban, and Community. Orchestras were categorized according to the size of their budgets and were defined as such in order to facilitate an exchange of information that addressed mutual concerns. Over time, however, the metropolitan orchestra category had become so bloated and the needs of its members so diverse. Some of those concerns were not germane to smaller 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 minimum required for a major orchestra). The term Regional was chosen to enhance the standing of these orchestras in the eyes of the National Endowment for the Arts.

At a meeting in Boston the following week, the League's board approved of this new category. The orchestras of eighteen cities were recognized as Regional orchestras: Birmingham (Alabama Symphony), Columbus, Orlando, Hartford, Poughkeepsie (Hudson Valley Philharmonic), Louisville, Miami, Nashville, Oakland, Oklahoma City (Oklahoma Symphony), Portland (Oregon Symphony), Phoenix, Richmond, San Diego, San Jose, Toledo, Calgary, and Winnipeg. The number of regional orchestras in the U.S. has grown over the decades, while some orchestras have moved into the ICSOM category and others have become obsolete.

The increasing activity of orchestras of this size and their unique challenges necessitated a forum in order to share information and discuss common concerns, a task that was accomplished in the following decade.

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History



The Spokane Symphony Orchestra in the 1980s.

The origins of ROPA date back the 1970s when smaller, regional-sized orchestras, not yet defined as such by the League (and often situated in communities removed from major metropolitan areas), faced the painful reality of employing professional musicians with limited operating budgets.

Nathan Kahn had witnessed this state of affairs throughout his career as a professional bassist. His first experiences dated from the 1970s, when the AFM Symphony Services Department did not exist in its present state and when Locals, who had little experience or understanding of the needs of musicians in smaller orchestras, would negotiate contracts for many orchestras.

Kahn was a member of the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) during this decade, witnessing a brief and somewhat successful strike, which was then followed by a dismal lockout in 1979. All of this occurred in a heavily anti-union section of the country, which only exacerbated the sense of frustration and isolation among the musicians. In 1981, he left Tulsa to assume the position of principal bass of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra (NSO), a situation in which he witnessed several musicians dismissed in violation of the contract and who were not reinstated despite legal action. The Local, which had never addressed terminations of this sort, was at a loss as to what action to take.

Certain situations that were not part of ICSOM-level orchestras were nevertheless germane to regional orchestras. Many of these 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 concept, embraced by conductors and managements, was an attempt to attract quality players and create a cohesive unit in the orchestra. Unfortunately, the core orchestra players were often paid a salary insufficient to support a living wage performing only with the orchestra. This resulted in musicians taking other work, which would often interfere with their orchestra commitments and schedules. In addition, the divisiveness between the core members and the per-service musicians caused resentment in the orchestra, which naturally became salient during contract negotiations.

While ICSOM had support from the AFM and had a forum for member orchestras to exchange information, offer support, and present information so players could make informed decisions about their situations, regional orchestras lacked player conference representation in the AFM or any established networking system to share information.

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.

Nathan'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 orchestras about the effectiveness of a Regional Orchestra 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 began as a concept, or dream, came to fruition when Lew Waldeck organized the first Regional Orchestra Players' Association Conference in Columbus, Ohio from September 7-9, 1984.

"The problems of Regional orchestras are unique and numerous. Communication, research and expert advice are the solutions to these problems. To realize ROPA's potential, one only has to look at where the ICSOM orchestras were twenty-three years ago prior to the formation of ICSOM, and where the ICSOM orchestras are today. ROPA's goals and objectives will parallel those of ICSOM, but with awareness of the special needs and desires of both the full-time and the part-time musician."

--ROPA Bulletin, 1984

The following orchestras were represented at the convention: Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Fort Lauderdale Symphony Orchestra (now defunct), Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Sacramento Symphony Orchestra, San Jose Symphony Orchestra, Spokane Symphony Orchestra, Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra, and the

Wichita Symphony Orchestra. (The Memphis Symphony Orchestra would have been represented, but the musicians were on strike during the duration of the conclave.) The following orchestras attended the convention on an observational basis: Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, and the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. All representatives traveled to and attended the conference at their own expense.

The AFM and ICSOM officers in attendance were Victor Fuentealba, President of the AFM; Lew Waldeck, assistant to the AFM president; Fred Zenone, ICSOM president and member of the National Symphony Orchestra; and Maynard Yost and Lynn Johnson, both of the AFM Symphony Department.

Local union officers who attended the convention included Tommy Dale, president of Local 103, Columbus, Ohio; Dennis Danders, president of Local 297, Wichita, Kansas; John Palanchian, former ICSOM officer and vice-president of Local 802, New York; Buddy Pitts, secretary of Local 444, Jacksonville, Florida; Richard Totusek, board member of Local 105, Spokane, Washington; Weymouth Young, secretary of Local 94, Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Gary Wisner, secretary of Local 655, Miami, Florida.

Major speakers at the convention included Victor Fuentealba, Lew Waldeck, Fred Zenone, and Darryl Edwards, general manager of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

The following sessions were presented at the conference. Fred Zenone presented "Orchestra Administration from the Viewpoint of Locals and Players"; Lew Waldeck and Fred Zenone presented "Preparations for Contract Negotiations"; Lew Waldeck presented both the "Symphony Orchestra Hearing Conservation Study" and "Problems and Abuses of the Drug Inderal"; and Lew Waldeck and Fred Zenone presented "Strike Preparations." Maynard Yost and Lew Waldeck both prepared the ROPA wage scale and charts.

Individual consultations between Lew Waldeck with the orchestra delegates and informal discussion between all delegates on topics relevant to their situations were also conducted.

The status of orchestras in negotiations was reported by their delegates. Libby Pistolesi of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Beth Elder of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, and Rick Ricker of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra all made reports at the convention.

REGIONAL ORCHESTRAS LAUNCH NETWORK

On the weekend of September 7, 8, and 9, a new organization, the Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA), held its first symposium in Columbus, Ohio. ROPA will serve as a communications network so that musicians and their Local representatives can learn how other regional orchestras are dealing with matters such as contract negotiations.

The inception of ROPA actually occurred more than a year ago when Nathan Kahn, a bassist with the Nashville Symphony, realized that the Federation's Symphony Orchestra "A" and "B" charts, which detail wages and working conditions in the major orchestras, were not directly useful to orchestras on the regional level. He felt a chart was needed which would directly address these issues for regional orchestras. Therefore, Kahn sent out a questionnaire to a number of orchestras in an effort to collect similar information from those ensembles. Since regional orchestras operate on much smaller budgets than major orchestras, regional orchestra personnel are often part-time players, or a mixture of full-time and part-time musicians. Their services are often scattered over the duration of a season in a relatively unorganized manner, as opposed to the strictly struc-

ture of the strictly structured schedules of most major orchestras. The President rapidly pointed out that a compilation of information was not all that was necessary — rather, the regional orchestras required their own communications network similar to that of the larger orchestras. Locals and regional symphony musicians desperately needed the opportunity to confer directly with their colleagues in other cities. This type of communication is extremely important not only during negotiations, but during the course of day-to-day operations as well. With the assistance of the Symphony Department, ROPA, an organization of player delegates and Local officials representing regional orchestras, was established.

The efforts of regional orchestra representatives enabled the Symphony Department to publish the first listings of "Wage Scales and Conditions in the Regional Orchestras." Perhaps the single most important question asked in this revised questionnaire was, "What do the regional orchestras need most?" The overwhelming response was that serious face-to-face meetings with representatives of other orchestras and their Locals were needed.

In response to this request planning for the initial ROPA Symposium began and Maynard Yost of the Symphony

meaningful criteria to determine which orchestras to invite to the conference. The American Symphony Orchestra League defines a regional orchestra as one whose budget is between \$900,000 and \$3.25 million. While those orchestras were clearly candidates for participation, the ROPA organizers also chose to include those orchestras which operate under separate symphony, opera, and ballet budgets of less than \$900,000 each. Along with these split budget orchestras, those in the early stages of development were also invited, since an orchestra similar in structure to a regional orchestra, having an active players' committee involved with its Local in the negotiations of its master agreement, would have experience to share with the other orchestras, even if its budget was not quite up to the prescribed level. Regional orchestras that were already members of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) were invited to attend the conference as guests, since it is important to recognize that their affiliation with ICSOM does not override their need to communicate with other regional orchestras.

In all, thirteen orchestras were represented at the symposium, some sending two,

three, or even four members. Seven Locals also sent officers or Executive Board members as representatives. The Federation was represented by President Fuentelba, Presidential Assistant Lew Waldeck, and Symphony Department staffers Maynard Yost and Lynn Johnson. ICSOM

Department did the vast amount of administrative work necessary to ensure that the seminar ran smoothly. President Tommy Dale and Vice President Chris Durham, of Columbus Local 103 which hosted the event, also provided valuable assistance.

The first problem encountered was deciding upon

(Continued on page eighteen)



Left: AFM President Victor Fuentelba (right) congratulates Nathan Kahn (center) on his election as ROPA Chairman, as Presidential Assistant Lew Waldeck (left) looks on.



Above: ICSOM Chairman Fred Zenone explains a fine point in management relations during the workshop on orchestra administration he gave at the first ROPA Symposium, which was held in Columbus, Ohio, in September.



Below: The newly elected ROPA officers meet with Lew Waldeck and Fred Zenone of ICSOM. From left to right are: Vice Chairman J. Bruce Schultz, Lew Waldeck, Secretary Libby Pistolessi, Treasurer Leonard Byrne, Fred Zenone and Chairman Nathan Kahn.

INTERNATIONAL MUSICIAN

DECEMBER, 1984

The first ROPA officers were elected:

- Nathan Kahn, president (Nashville Symphony Orchestra);
- Bruce Schultz, vice-president (Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra);
- Elizabeth Pistolessi, secretary (Charlotte Symphony Orchestra);
- Leonard Byrne, treasurer (Spokane Symphony Orchestra); and
- Dana Karr, newsletter editor (Nashville Symphony Orchestra).

Subcommittees that addressed concerns specific to regional orchestras and their monitors were appointed. Chris Durham of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and Leonard Byrne of the Spokane Symphony monitored the Core Orchestra Problems committee. Conductor Evaluations were monitored by Jane Owen of the Fort Worth Symphony and Russ Schultz of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. The topic of Large Instruments on Airlines (in conjunction with the ICSOM committee) was addressed by Mark Tetrault of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra. Auditions, which included a survey of the audition procedure, the topic of taped resumes, and audition repertoire was monitored by Tom Derthick of the Sacramento Symphony, JoAnn Tanner of the San Jose Symphony, and Jane Owen of the Fort Worth Symphony. The Media committee, which included surveys of media uses and the abuses that occurred in regional orchestra contracts and which violated AFM laws was monitored by Tom Derthick of the Sacramento Symphony, Richard Totusek of the Spokane Symphony, and Sam Gnagey of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

AFM President Fuentealba expressed enthusiastic support for ROPA in his address to the conference and announced at the final session that he would recommend Conference status for ROPA in the AFM. Fred Zenone also initiated the ROPA treasury, which he accomplished by challenging everyone to match his contribution.

With the rallying cry of “ROPA is our organization,” it was emphasized that ROPA was primarily a communication organization, so delegates were encouraged to keep in touch with each other, the ROPA Executive Committee, and the AFM Symphony Department about developments and/or problems in their orchestras. Delegates and orchestra members were also encouraged to provide feedback in what areas they wanted ROPA more involved.

Eligibility status for ROPA was determined according to the following criteria. All American symphony orchestras that were “regional” in size according to the stipulations set forth by the American Symphony Orchestra League could apply for membership. However, if orchestras had not yet achieved the regional category but their operations were similar to regional orchestras and they employed either full- or part-time musicians, then they could be considered for membership on an individual basis.

In order to entice the maximum number of orchestras to join the new organization and to make membership in ROPA as affordable as possible, annual dues were set at one hundred dollars. Orchestras who had achieved ROPA membership and who made a \$100 contribution to the entity by January 1, 1985 were considered Charter Members. These funds were allocated for operational expenses until bylaws and a dues structure were enacted. The following orchestras were charter members of ROPA: Austin Symphony Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Springs Symphony, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Florida Orchestra (Tampa), Fort Wayne Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, Omaha Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonic Orchestra of Florida (Fort Lauderdale), Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Sacramento Symphony Orchestra, San Jose Symphony Orchestra, Savannah Symphony Orchestra, Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, Spokane Symphony Orchestra, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Orchestra Group (Norfolk), and the Wichita Symphony Orchestra.

A major concern was how ROPA was going to finance itself. It was obvious that the organization needed to sustain itself from within rather than trying to obtain continuing outside support. The cost of bulletins,

newsletters, conferences, surveys, letters of support to the press, managements and/or boards and to musicians during strikes and lockouts, and overall increased communication and activities necessitated major funding requirements. From 1985-86, Leonard Byrne obtained a tax identification number. With the help of AFM Treasurer Bob Moss, he had ROPA added to the AFM's group exemption letter, which granted ROPA tax-exempt status.

Putting together a set of bylaws was a major undertaking: A total of six different bylaw proposals was written, each building on and improving the work of others. Agreement on a final draft was reached during a three-hour telephone conference call in May of 1985.

"ROPA is communication, education and research in the form of wage scale charts, bulletins and newsletters, conferences and surveys."

--Nathan Kahn, ROPA President
1985 ROPA Conference
Fort Worth, Texas

By 1985, delegates had already received, completed and returned the 1984-85 Wage Scale and Conditions Chart and the ROPA Media Questionnaire to the AFM Symphony Department, which were subsequently published in the spring. Since ROPA was now a much more established organization, the committees appointed to undertake various concerns specific to regional orchestras became more active and involved in those areas of concern. Consequently, ROPA delegates received the following queries over the next few months: Audition Procedures Survey, Core Orchestra Problems Survey, Conductor Evaluation Procedures Survey, Dismissals and Tenure Procedures Survey, and the ROPA By-laws Proposal. The first ROPA newsletter was sent out in May of 1985.

The second annual ROPA conference was held in September of 1985 in Fort Worth, Texas. The conference was organized by Jane Owen from the Fort Worth Symphony and hosted by musicians of the Fort Worth Symphony, the Fort Worth Symphony Association, and Local 72 (whose president, Ray Hair, later became the AFM President). In the August bulletin, Kahn was excited about the idea of establishing a liaison group between ROPA and the Regional Orchestra Managers' Association (ROMA). ICSOM and the Major Orchestra Managers' Conference had experienced tremendous success with their liaison group, and Kahn hoped that ROPA could achieve the same. Thus resolutions passed at the conference requested that ROMA approve the Code of Ethical

Practices for National and International Auditions (which the 1985 ROPA Conference had approved prior to this request). ROPA approved of this Code at its meeting in December of 1985. It was also requested that ICSOM give permission to ROPA to use the ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Form as the official conductor form for ROPA orchestras, which was granted at the 1986 ICSOM Conference in Atlanta. It was agreed that after at least one year of use by ROPA orchestras that proved satisfactory, ROPA would then discuss with ICSOM the possibility of connecting with the ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Bank.

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"American society has several very strong social directions that influence the way we think about ourselves and about the way we work with each other. One of the things that is very important and that most of us have is that we have a lack of faith in collective action. We've not been brought up from the very earliest days to believe in collective action. Our society is built on the concept of everyone for themselves, everyone pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps...It is the ingrained total belief of our society—it was the belief of the founders of our society—that rugged individualism, that that's the way that people ought to behave....It's very hard to get to collective action because our people don't believe in it. [But] it is the collective action that we must have.

--Lew Waldeck
1986 ROPA Conference
Spokane, Washington

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Official Newsletter of the
Regional Orchestra Players' Association
Andrew Brandt, Editor

The Leading Tone



Official Publication of the
Regional Orchestra Players' Association
Andrew Brandt, Editor
218 Boulevard Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71104

The 1984-85 ROPA Executive Committee evolved into the following format:

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- Nathan Kahn, president
 - Bruce Schultz, vice-president
 - Elizabeth Pistolessi, secretary
 - Leonard Byrne, treasurer
 - Andrew Brandt, newsletter editor
 - Chris Durham, member-at-large
 - Rosemary Estes, member-at-large
 - Jane Owen, member-at-large

“Our activities include an annual conference, publication of bulletins with detailed information on all contract settlements, strikes and lockouts, publication of a newsletter, ‘The Leading Tone,’ conducting surveys and maintaining a roster of contact persons in all ROPA orchestras and locals so that orchestras can communicate with one another.”

--Elizabeth Pistolessi, ROPA Secretary
1986

As ROPA evolved, different topics were presented that sought to create a more educated, informed musician body. At the 1987 ROPA Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, labor attorney John Schulman conducted a Grievance and Negotiation Workshop. At the same conference, psychotherapist David Sternbach presented a session on Stress Management for Musicians. At the 1994 convention in Dallas, Texas, Ronald Bauers of the University of Nebraska at Omaha presented “Internal Revenue Code Section 501” and Alan Isaacson, financial consultant to the AFM, presented “Understanding Your Orchestra’s Financial Condition.” At the 2000 convention at Savannah, Georgia, Commissioners Jim Leaphart and Mike DiPinto of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service presented “Additional Readings on Interest-Based Bargaining: Best Practices and Techniques from Across the Nation.” At the 2007 conference in San Francisco, California, ROPA Legal Counsel Patricia Polach presented “The Three Pillars of Labor Law.” At the 2011 conference in Portland, Maine, AFM Director of Electronic Media Services Debbie Newmark Presented “Electronic Media Opportunities.”

In 1988, the ROPA member orchestras voted unanimously in favor of incorporating the AFM Regional Orchestra Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) into the ROPA bylaws. At the 1987 Conference, the ROPA bylaws were

amended establishing the ERF and requesting \$100 from member orchestras in addition to their annual dues. At the 1992 AFM Convention, ROPA was successful in getting its ERF included in the AFM bylaws.

At the 1988 conference in Nashville, Tennessee, a resolution was submitted that encouraged member orchestras to include their ROPA delegates on the Orchestra Committee and to participate on the negotiating team.

At the 1989 ROPA Convention in Colorado Springs, Colorado, an addendum was added to the ROPA bylaws providing for associate membership for orchestras whose total budget is \$800,000 or less. Recognizing that Associate Member Orchestras play an integral role in the conference, the Bylaws Addendum "Associate Membership" was subsequently moved to Article III, Section 5 in 2002.

"Unions do not operate in a vacuum. All unions have been and will continue to be influenced by political forces, socioeconomic conditions, changes in the work force, and the management's opposition to organizing. Every union is faced with these problems and many more. AFM is no exception. The hallmark of a great union is its willingness to communicate, to change, to address the genuine needs of its members and prepare for the next generation."

--William E. Roehl
August 18, 1989

In 1988, the ICSOM Conference passed a motion establishing the Trade Division Committee comprised of representatives from ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, RMA and the AFM President. The committee was officially appointed in September, its objective to consider ways in which trade division structures in other unions might serve as models for the AFM. If such models were not applicable, then the committee was to recommend alterations that would strengthen the status of player conferences within the Federation. Bill Roehl (1924-2005) was retained to advise the Trade Division Committee in February of 1989.

The resultant Roehl report was one of the most significant documents in the history of the AFM. It called for the AFM Symphony and Recording Departments to be replaced with larger and more solvent entities, named the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) and the Electronic Media Services Division. Each division was to be administered by its own director (who was also appointed by the AFM president) who would serve as an

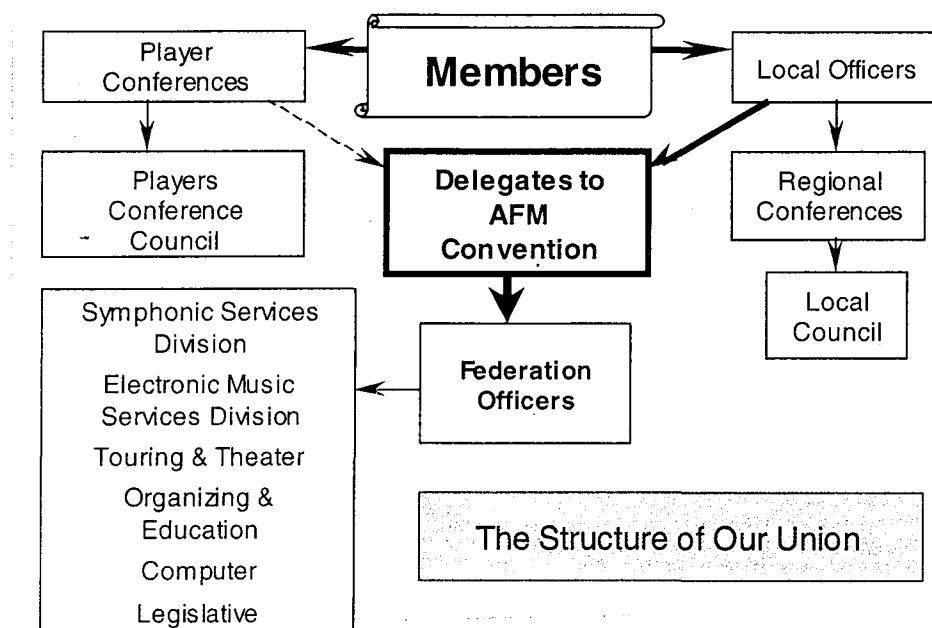
assistant to the president and be advised by a steering committee composed of rank-and-file player representatives. The first director of the SSD, who was appointed at the urging of the symphonic player conferences, was Lew Waldeck. An Electronic Media Services Division Steering Committee was to be established that would be composed of a small group of RMA officers to be determined in consultation with that conference, plus a media representative from the symphonic services.

The report changed the name of the Summit Committee to the Player Conference Council, consisting of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA, and directed the International Executive Board (IEB) to meet with the Council. This was an important change because it allowed rank-and-file symphonic and recording musicians the privilege of direct access to the AFM leadership.

The Roehl report had two very important consequences in regard to how symphony musicians were represented by the AFM: it greatly increased the importance of symphonic concerns with the AFM bureaucracy; and, more importantly, it enhanced the influence that rank-and-file musicians had to advise the union leadership in matters that related to their circumstances.

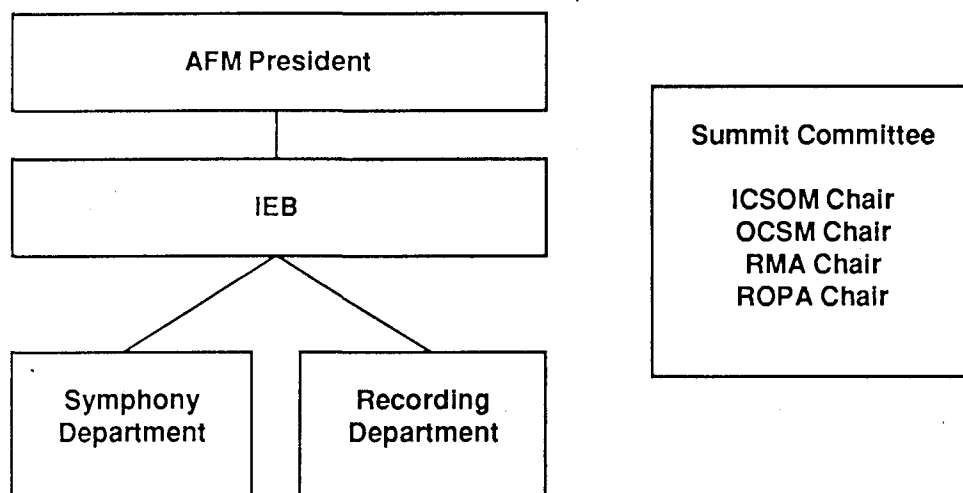
The Roehl report was adopted by the International Executive Board on March 31, 1990.

Through their player conferences, symphonic musicians now have the right to propose changes to AFM bylaws and to speak on the floor of the AFM convention. The concept of the Player Conference Council was so effective that the AFM created a similar group for local union conferences. It is now assumed that the AFM leadership seeks input from player conferences regarding concerns that affect the members of those committees. This was not always possible prior to adoption of the changes proposed by the Roehl report.

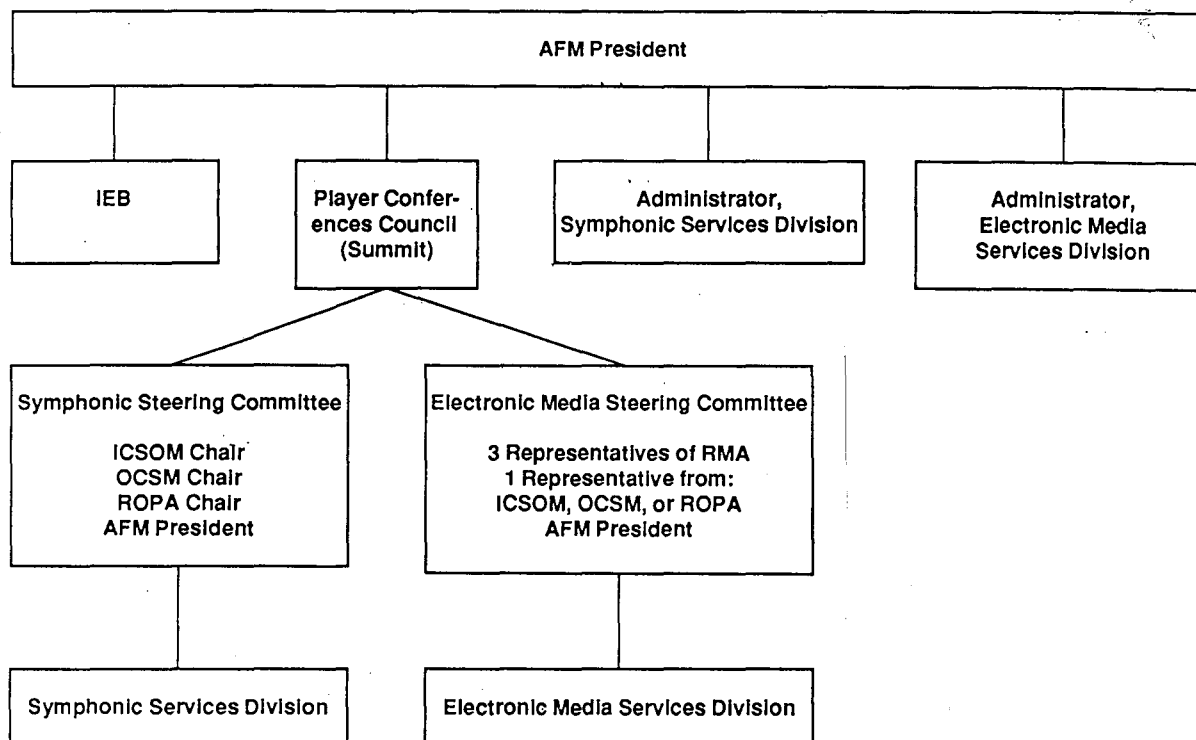


(Fetherston, Tom. 1998. AFM Bylaws and Your Contract. *The Leading Tone* 15, no. 1 [October]: 6.)

AFM Before Adoption of the Roehl Report



AFM After Adoption of the Roehl Report



(AFM After Adoption of the Roehl Report)

(Roehl, William E. The Roehl Report: Narrowing the Rift Between the AFM and Player Conferences. *Senza Sordino* 28, nos. 5-6 [June-August 1990]: 2-3.)

The Tenth Annual ROPA Conference took place in 1993 in New Haven, Connecticut. Nathan Kahn presented *ROPA: A Decade of Growth*, reflecting on the conference's birth a decade earlier. Delegates formulated a five-year plan for ROPA, which required a gradual progression.

Following the AFM Convention in June 1997, in which reform legislation that would have changed the Union was defeated, the players' conferences were concerned about the future of the AFM and how it could be altered for the better. In August of 1997, all three orchestra conferences (ROPA, OCSM, and ICSOM) discussed the restructure process during the past decade and the major concerns facing the AFM at the present time.

In a historic moment, the four players' conferences (ROPA, OSCM, ICSOM, and RMA) agreed to establish a joint Investigative Task Force (ITF) to study the AFM and to recommend changes that would render its operations more efficient for full-time members, especially those covered under CBAs (both local and international). The ITF consisted of five players' conference officers and five Local officers. Leonard ("Lennie") Leibowitz served as legal counsel to the group. Never before had the players' conferences taken such an active role in planning the future of the AFM. In order to help implement the recommendations of the task force and to promote further unity among the conferences, all four players' conferences also agreed to hold a Unity Conference in August of 1998 in Las Vegas, Nevada—a first-ever conclave. It was an unprecedented event, as there had never been such a large meeting of rank-and-file musician delegates, AFM local officers, international officers, and staff in a meeting not sponsored by the AFM. The fact that volunteers organized this meeting (and not union staffers) makes this achievement even more extraordinary. The Unity Conference signaled increased cooperation between the players' conferences in pursuing goals that would change the AFM.

The restructure process and the 1997 AFM Convention were major topics of discussion during the 14th Annual ROPA Conference. The objective of the discussion was to keep delegates informed of the proceedings.

"The ITF had one overriding goal: to discover those principles on which a labor union must be built in order truly to be a labor union, and then to apply those principles to our own union in order that the AFM might survive as a labor union into the twenty-first century."

--Preliminary Report of the ITF.

Andrew Brandt, ITF Secretary

In August of 1999, amended ITF resolutions were brought to the floor of the AFM Convention to be debated and incorporated (or not) into the AFM Constitution and Bylaws. The following changes were approved by the 1999 AFM Convention and were presented to the delegates at the 1999 ROPA Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee. ("Recommendations" are proposed by the International Executive Board [IEB] and "Resolutions" are proposed by officers, delegates, and players' conferences.)

The first recommendation changed the AFM's mission to place more emphasis on organizing, collective bargaining, lobbying, democratic involvement of members, and leadership development. The number of orchestras for whom work dues would be sent was increased. This

augmented the number of orchestras who paid work dues, particularly in OCSM and ROPA, and provided more money for the AFM, including the SSD.

A tiered structure was created which would allow more ROPA and OCSM orchestras to join the strike fund. Annual dues and strike benefits were now evaluated on a four-tiered structure derived from the weekly salary of the member musicians. Another resolution expanded participation in the Theatre Defense Fund to symphony orchestras and other bargaining units that were not eligible to participate in the AFM Symphony-Opera Strike Fund. The restructure of the AFM Strike Fund and the ability of orchestras to join the Theatre Defense Fund were major improvements in the negotiating tools orchestras brought to the bargaining table.

The ITF withdrew its resolution to create a Conference Representative Board. Instead, AFM President Steve Young agreed to create a task force involving the Players' Conference Council (PCC) and other members of the ITF, AFM Counsel, and members of the IEB. This new task force studied many ways to reorganize IEB elections and to ensure PCC and Local representation, and tried to make these recommendations before the 2000 players' conferences.

The IEB submitted a resolution promising that the AFM would continue to develop and maintain a program to educate local and AFM officers, staff, and union members in a manner and form to be determined by the IEB. The Federation would make annual reports on the educational programs' progress and effectiveness. The resolution was passed.

The ROPA-approved ITF resolution, which prohibited contractors from holding local offices, was amended and passed. Because of this amendment, personnel managers working in a local's jurisdiction are prohibited from holding office in the Local. Another resolution, proposed by the ITF and supported by ROPA, helped protect musicians who file charges against local officers—under the umbrella of the previous resolution—against retaliation by these officers.

Other legislation that was adopted stipulated that locals were now required to send a delegate to RMA or TMA, as they are required to send delegates to ROPA, ICSOM, and OCSM conferences; and the AFM president was now required to appoint one rank-and-file trustee to the AFM-EP (pension fund), but not to the Canadian AFM-EPW.

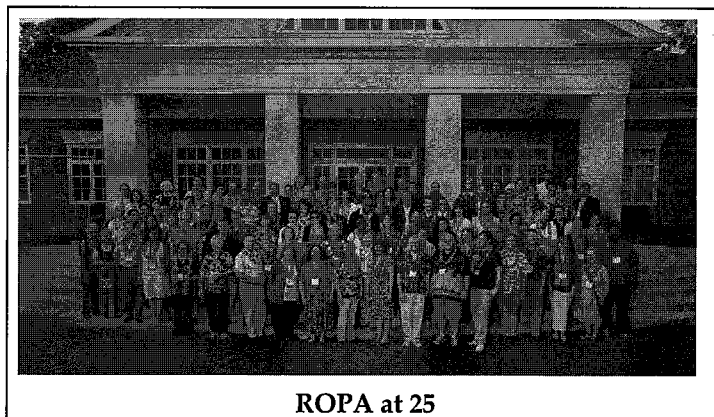
At the 1999 ROPA Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, the ROPA bylaws were amended to acknowledge that since it is the obligation of ROPA membership for each member orchestra to participate in the annual

ROPA conference, each member orchestra is required to elect a delegate and alternate delegate, at least one of whom will attend the conference.

At the 2000 ROPA Conference in Savannah, Georgia, ROPA conferred on Andrew Brandt the title of President Emeritus for his many years of devoted work on behalf of ROPA. Andrew had attended every ROPA conference since its inception in 1984 as a delegate or officer of ROPA. He had likewise served ROPA for sixteen years in various capacities: editor of *The Leading Tone*, member-at-large, secretary, and president for six years.

The march of technology into the new millennium transformed the course of human history, and the arts were impacted by this revolution on the most basic level. The ROPA Electronic Media Conference was established at the 2001 conference. The committee formulated a closed, unrestricted e-mail list service for internal communication, as well as a mission and agenda toward advancing the electronic media interests of ROPA members. This included phonograph recording and video as well as newer Internet technologies that were evolving. The ROPA Internet discussion board has become an invaluable resource by which delegates can share information and it has helped bind the network of member orchestras closer.

In 2003, AFM President Tom Lee invited local officers, orchestra members, and player conference representatives to the first-ever AFM Summit Meeting for Symphonic Recording to discuss the future of symphonic recordings and how to make more orchestral recordings available on the market.



“Together We Can Make It Happen”

The 2009 ROPA Conference, which was held in Dayton, Ohio, celebrated the Conference’s twenty-fifth anniversary. The festivities culminated with a special banquet in honor of Nathan Kahn, who was honored with the founder’s award.

In March of 2011, the ROPA Executive Board met in Phoenix, Arizona, to undertake a strategic planning session. This session generated a document that provides guiding principles for the board in defining ROPA and its role within the player's conference.

Now celebrating three decades of advocacy on behalf of musicians throughout the U.S., ROPA continues to support musicians through education and information, continually working toward higher goals of service. In addition to regular officers, over time adjunct officer positions have been created to enhance ROPA's professionalism. These officers have included AFM Convention Delegate, Editor of *The Leading Tone*, Strike Fund Trustee, Conference Coordinator, Legal Counsel, Electronic Media Chair, Parliamentarian, Webmaster, and Historian.

Although founder Nathan Kahn is proud of the impact ROPA has made on the lives of professional musicians, he is even more impressed with what occurred after the conference was established. "Once ROPA was created, it was amazing how much people absorbed information. Everybody was like a sponge, soaking up information. What I am most proud of is what orchestras did with it. When you look at the level of sophistication and education that ROPA orchestras have absorbed since its founding, it is really an extraordinary testament."

The permanence and importance of ROPA is witnessed in the growth of its membership and in the organization itself. From the nucleus of twenty-four charter members, ROPA presently has seventy-five full member orchestras and ten associate member orchestras.

ROPA is an organization that exists for the musician and is driven by the musician, on an infinite quest to create a better world for future generations of musicians and a better future for music.

Presidents of ROPA

1984-2014

Nathan Kahn, <i>president emeritus</i> (Nashville Symphony Orchestra)	1984-1988
Rosemary Estes (Florida Philharmonic)	1988-1990
Diane Merrill (Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra)	1990-1994
Andrew Brandt, <i>president emeritus</i> (Shreveport Symphony Orchestra)	1994-1999
Ann Drinan (Hartford Symphony Orchestra)	1999-2001
Barbara Zmich, <i>president emerita</i> (Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra)	2001-2006
Tom Fetherston (Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra)	2006-2007
Carla Lehmeier-Tatum (New Mexico Philharmonic)	2007-2014

Regional Orchestra Players' Association 2014

Officers

Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, President
New Mexico Philharmonic

Nancy Nelson, Vice-President
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Houston Ballet Orchestra

Karen Sandene, Secretary
Omaha Symphony Orchestra
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra

Dennis Danders, Treasurer
Wichita Symphony Orchestra

Adjunct Officers

Linda Boivin, Conference Coordinator
New Mexico Philharmonic

Rachel Cox, Historian
Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra

Ginger Lawrence, Leading Tone Proofreader Minnesota Opera Orchestra
New Mexico Philharmonic

Karen Sandene, Strike Fund Trustee
Omaha Symphony Orchestra
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra

Rich Jones, Webmaster
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra

Shane Youtz, ROPA Counsel

Members-at-Large

Karen Barker
Erie Philharmonic Orchestra
West Virginia Symphony

Naomi Bendsdorf-Frisch
Illinois Philharmonic
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Janice Galassi
Allentown Symphony

Richard Kelly
Portland Symphony Orchestra

Mary Anne Lemoine
Colorado Springs Philharmonic

Donna Loomis
El Paso Symphony

John Michael Smith
Minnesota Opera Orchestra

**Delegate-at-Large to the
AFM Convention**
Maurice Grants
California Philharmonic

ROPA Member Orchestras

Full Members

Akron Symphony Orchestra	Madison Symphony
Albany Symphony	Memphis Symphony Orchestra
Allentown Symphony	Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra
Ann Arbor Symphony	Minnesota Opera Orchestra
Arizona Opera Orchestra	Mississippi Symphony Orchestra
Atlanta Ballet Orchestra	Monterey Symphony
Atlanta Opera Orchestra	Napa Valley Symphony
Austin Symphony Orchestra	New Haven Symphony Orchestra
Boulder Philharmonic	New Mexico Philharmonic
California Philharmonic	New West Symphony Orchestra
California Symphony Orchestra	Oakland East Bay Symphony
Canton Symphony Orchestra	Omaha Symphony Orchestra
Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Orchestra	Orchestra Iowa
Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra	Pacific Symphony
Dallas Opera Orchestra	Palm Beach Opera Orchestra
Dayton Philharmonic	Pasadena Symphony Orchestra
Delaware Symphony Orchestra	Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra	Portland Opera Orchestra
East Texas Symphony Orchestra	Portland Symphony Orchestra
El Paso Symphony	Reading Symphony Orchestra
Elgin Symphony Orchestra	Rhode Island Philharmonic
Erie Philharmonic Orchestra	Richmond Symphony
Eugene Symphony	Santa Barbara Symphony
Fort Wayne Philharmonic	Santa Rosa Symphony
Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra	Sarasota Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony	Shreveport Symphony Orchestra
Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra	South Bend Symphony
Hartford Symphony Orchestra	Southwest Florida Symphony
Hollywood Bowl Orchestra	Spokane Symphony Orchestra
Houston Ballet Orchestra	Symphony Silicon Valley
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra	Tacoma Symphony
Huntsville Symphony Orchestra	Toledo Symphony Orchestra
Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra	Tucson Symphony Orchestra
Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra	West Virginia Symphony
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra	Wichita Symphony Orchestra
Las Vegas Philharmonic	Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra
Lexington Philharmonic	
Long Beach Symphony Orchestra	
Los Angeles Opera Orchestra	

Associate Members

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

APPENDIX

Important Documents in ROPA's History

Nathan A. Kahn
765 McMurray Drive, #B-3
Nashville, Tennessee 37211

November 8, 1982

Dear Colleague,

In recent years "regional" orchestras (as defined by The American Symphony League) have experienced significant growth in the quality of the orchestras, budget, and players' salaries. Along with this growth has come many problems for the players. These various problems seem to be common in varying degrees to all regional orchestras, yet unlike our colleagues in the major orchestras, there has been only sporadic communication between us on common problems. Today there is a much higher percentage of players earning their entire or a majority of their income from regional orchestras, yet there seems to be little dialogue between us as to what is a fair wage for us for the amount of work we do. My purpose in writing you is to propose the formation of a Regional Orchestra Player's Association.

Initially, I think we can all learn a great deal from each other by sending copies of our master agreements to one another. In my experience on negotiating committees, I have seen some rather bad contract clauses rectified by simply learning how another regional orchestra dealt with that particular problem.

Depending upon the amount of interest in this type of organization, there are possibilities for a summer conference, formation of a wage, scale and condition chart similar to the major orchestras, and perhaps someday in the future a strike fund, if this be necessary.

Many regional orchestras have been in contact with ICSOM to discuss problems, and some have actively sought membership. As many of you know, ICSOM's current by-laws regarding minimum and number of full time players make membership prohibitive for many regional orchestras. Nevertheless, our problems still exist, we are professional musicians, and we need to discuss them amongst ourselves. It is possible that if we form a strong well organized association, the association could become an affiliate of ICSOM in the future. There will be regional orchestras who will grow into the major category and will become ICSOM orchestras, but until then I would like to see an organization that will serve our current needs.

Please fill out the enclosed survey, and return in the enclosed envelope. Any suggestions and comments are very much needed at this point, and certainly most welcome.

Sincerely,



Principal Bass
Nashville Symphony Orchestra

SURVEY

Does your orchestra feel that a Regional Orchestra Player's Association is needed?

___ YES ___ NO

What services does your orchestra feel a Regional Orchestra Player's Association could perform that would best serve their needs?

Would your orchestra be willing to elect a player representative for a Regional Orchestra Player's Association? ___ YES ___ NO

Name, address & telephone of this person.

Does your orchestra feel that a newsletter would be of service and of interest at this point? ___ YES ___ NO

Is anyone in your orchestra interested in serving as Editor of such a publication? ___ YES ___ NO If answer is yes, please provide name and address of this person.

Should a Regional Orchestra Player's Association be organized, would your orchestra be willing to pay membership dues? (To cover costs of mailings, directory, newsletters, etc.) ___ YES ___ NO

If your answer is yes, how much annual dues does your orchestra feel is a fair amount? _____

Would you be willing and able to send approximately 30 copies of your master agreement to the orchestra committee presidents of the regional orchestras in the U.S. and Canada? (There are approximately 30 regional orchestras in the U.S. and Canada, according to ASOL.) ___ YES ___ NO

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS
(use back page)



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

AFFILIATED WITH THE A.F.L.-C.I.O.

February 13, 1984

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Victor W. Fuentealba

1500 Broadway

New York, N. Y. 10036

(212) 869-1330

Mr. Nathan Kahn
Nashville Symphony Orchestra
765 McMurray Drive #B-3
Nashville, Tennessee 37211

Dear Mr. Kahn:

The Symphony Department of the A.F. of M. is planning to hold the first Regional Orchestra Players Association Symposium in Columbus, Ohio on September 7th, 8th, and 9th if there are a sufficient number of ROPA delegates able to attend.

If your Orchestra has not yet chosen a delegate, please do so as soon as possible, even if your orchestra cannot send a delegate to the Symposium. It is important for all the regional orchestras to have a contract person in each orchestra so that communication between the orchestras is facilitated.

We plan to have several guest speakers including President Fuentealba and to hold workshops on orchestra administration, contract negotiations, and the structure of the symphony society.

The A.F. of M. will pay for the traveling expenses of guest speakers, meeting rooms and a hospitality suite, but we will be unable to fund the individual delegates travel or expenses. I hope the orchestras will find this meeting important enough to assess themselves enough to pay for the delegates attendance.

Local # 103, Columbus, Ohio, advises that the Sheraton Hotel will give us a convention rate of \$52 single and \$62 double.

I am sending a copy of this letter and an invitation to your Local. I would be pleased to have a good representation of Local Officials at the symposium and urge you to encourage them to come.

Please let my office know by March 9th if you are able to come so that we can finalize preparations.

I hope to see you all in September.

Fraternally yours,

Lew Waldeck
Assistant to the President
Symphony Department

LW/rm

REGIONAL ORCHESTRA
PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

The American Federation of Musicians' Symphony Department, headed by Lew Waldeck, is well on it's way to organizing a Regional Orchestra Players' Association. Most of the orchestras have already responded to the survey sent out by the AFM Symphony Department, and have expressed enthusiastic support for a Regional Orchestra Players' Association. The purpose of this newsletter is to acquaint member orchestras with each other, and to promote interest and participation of all regional orchestras.

Many of us are already involved in contract negotiations, or will be next season. I encourage all regional orchestras to take advantage of the services and advice available to them from the AFM Symphony Department. Lew Waldeck has written a "model" regional orchestra contract for reference, and he will be glad to review any orchestra's current master agreement. He is also available to come in and assist with any contract negotiation. The wage, scale and condition chart he is compiling from the surveys should be a real eye opener to us all.

There are many things a Regional Orchestra Players' Association can do for all of us, depending upon each orchestra's participation. A newsletter will keep members apprised of important current events, various contract negotiations, and feature articles and research on issues of interest. I would like to see a summer conference that would discuss core orchestra problems, orchestra unity, relationship or orchestras with their local musician's union, a workshop on negotiating skills and labor law, and many other issues relating to the growth of regional orchestras. Some projects for the future might include: A central source for conductor evaluations, (similar to ICSON Conductor Evaluation Procedure), a legislative action committee that will promote our interests in houses of government, and a strike fund.

It is long overdue that regional orchestra musicians form an association that will promote their interests and viewpoints. Regional orchestra managers have been meeting and promoting their views for some time. I am grateful to Lew Waldeck and the AFM for sponsoring this association, and hope that all regional orchestras will come forth as active participants, so that we can all better our lot as musicians in the future.

NATHAN KAHN
Nashville Symphony Orchestra

ROPA

BULLETIN

PLEASE POST

REGIONAL ORCHESTRA PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION

...SO WHAT IS ROPA?

ROPA is a new conference of the American Federation of Musicians, which just held its first convention on September 7-9, in Columbus, Ohio. ROPA is a communication organization for all Regional level symphony orchestras in the United States and its Territories. ROPA is also involved in researching problems that directly affect both full-time and part-time musicians in Regional orchestras. Some of this research is being done in conjunction with ICSOM, the International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians. The AFM Symphony Department, under the direction of Lew Waldeck, works closely with ROPA, assisting and consulting Regional orchestras in contract negotiations and disputes, and serves as a resource center for orchestra contracts and precedents in arbitration.

WHY DO WE NEED ROPA?

The problems of Regional orchestras are unique and numerous. Communication, research and expert advice are the solutions to these problems. To realize ROPA's potential, one only has to look at where the ICSOM orchestras were 23 years ago prior to the formation of ICSOM, and where the ICSOM orchestras are today. ROPA's goals and objectives will parallel those of ICSOM, but with awareness of the special needs and desires of both the full-time and part-time musician.

WHO CAN JOIN ROPA?

All American symphony orchestras who have achieved "Regional" status, according to the American Symphony Orchestra League are eligible for membership. Other orchestras that have not yet achieved "Regional" status according to ASOL, but whose operations are similar to a Regional orchestra, (full-time and part-time musicians employed) will be considered for membership on an individual basis. In addition, orchestras who have achieved membership in ROPA, and who make a minimum \$100 contribution to ROPA by January 1, 1985, shall be considered CHARTER MEMBERS of the organization. These funds will be utilized for the operation of ROPA, until by-laws and a dues structure are enacted.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Contact:

Bruce Schultz, Vice-President
Regional Orchestra Players' Association
1963 West 65th Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74132

day: 918-224-5750
evening: 918-445-5172

REGIONAL ORCHESTRA PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION

SYMPOSIUM

September 7-9, 1984

Columbus, Ohio

Friday Afternoon

Opening Remarks from Lew Waldeck

Address by President Fuentealba

Friday Evening

Topic: ROPA Wage Scales and Conditions Chart

Topic: Orchestra administration from the viewpoint of
Locals and Players

Saturday Morning

Topic: Preparations for contract negotiations

Topic: Noise problems

Saturday Afternoon

Address by Fred Zenone, Chairman of ICSOM

Nomination of ROPA Officers

Saturday Evening

ROPA Delegates' Dinner

Sunday Morning

Topic: Strike preparations

Reports: Charlotte, Birmingham, Nashville

Election of Officers

Site selection for 1985 symposium

Sunday Afternoon

Meeting with Local Officers

Official Publication of the Regional Orchestra Players Association

VOLUME I, NO. 1

MAY, 1985

ROPA ORGANIZED; 23 Charter Members !

On January 1, 1985, the Regional Orchestra Players Association was proud to list the following 24 orchestras as Charter Members of ROPA:

AUSTIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
COLORADO SPRINGS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
COLUMBUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FLORIDA ORCHESTRA (TAMPA)
FT. WAYNE PHILHARMONIC
FT. WORTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MEMPHIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
NASHVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
NEW MEXICO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
OMAHA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA OF FLORIDA
(Ft. Lauderdale)
RICHMOND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SACRAMENTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SAN JOSE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SAVANNAH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SHREVEPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SPOKANE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TULSA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
VIRGINIA ORCHESTRA GROUP (NORFOLK)
WICHITA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ROPA is a communication organization for all Regional level symphony orchestras in the United States and its Territories. To realize the potential of ROPA, one only has to look at where the ICSOM orchestras were 23 years ago (prior to the formation of ICSOM), and where the ICSOM orchestras are today. ROPA's goals and objectives will parallel those of ICSOM, but with awareness of the special needs and desires of both the full-time and part-time musician.

This first newsletter includes a full report on the ROPA convention held in Columbus, Ohio, September 7-9, 1984, news of contract settlements in member orchestras, and other information. We solicit your contributions, news, suggestions and support.

By-law proposals are being studied by all the ROPA officers, and the committees appointed at the convention are involved in research. Other regional orchestras are still being contacted concerning membership in ROPA. Plans for the 1985 convention in Ft. Worth, Texas are well under way.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

AFFILIATED WITH THE A.F.L.-C.I.O.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Victor W. Fuentealba

1500 Broadway

New York, N. Y. 10036

(212) 869-1330

April 19, 1985

Mr. Nathan Kahn
Chairman
Regional Orchestra
Players' Association
765 McMurray Drive, #B-3
Nashville, TN 37211

Dear Nathan:

The International Executive Board granted conference status to ROPA at its mid-winter meeting in February of this year, with the presumption that a final draft of ROPA's bylaws would be sent to my office before being submitted to the members of your association for their approval.

I am very pleased that the Nashville Symphony Strike has ended and I am happy that Lew Waldeck, his staff and the IEB were in a position to assist.

Best regards.

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

Victor W. Fuentealba
President

VWF/np
cc: Lew Waldeck

