

Electronic Media Summit

11/12/07 Alexandria, VA

Larry Gardner, Secretary-ROPA

President Lee opened up the summit, introducing IEB members in attendance (Folio, Skolnick, Linneman, & Parente) ICSOM board members (Ridge, Rood, Ross) ROPA Board members (Fetherston, Lehmeier, Gardner) and ICSOM Media committee chair, Bill Foster. Other ICSOM media committee members were present.

ROPA seemed well represented with Greg Goodall (LA Opera), Christine Frank (Pacific Symphony), and Charles Schuchat (Elgin Symphony) in addition to the previously mentioned officers.

President Lee gave a background of Symphonic Summits, recalling that he had called them in 2003 and 2005 for various concerns. As it turned out, this summit was to discuss today's negotiating environment as it relates to radio, and more specifically, to AFM's National Public Radio (NPR) Agreement, which expires January 31, 2008.

NPR Agreement

For years there has been an NPR agreement. The agreement states clearly that NPR is the employer. Now NPR has sold its flagship classical music programs, SymphonyCast and Performance Today to Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) also known as American Public Media (APM). NPR is less and less a purveyor of classical music, where it had been the largest before. MPR, which used to be a small college radio station, meanwhile, has grown to a huge organization. MPR is providing NPR with content. And, MPR is looking at the word employer and questioning why it should be the employer, when it doesn't pay the musicians, it doesn't hire and fire the musicians, and it doesn't appear to meet many of the criteria for a traditional employer/employee relationship. And, while our legal advisors feel very strongly that MPR/APM and NPR are employers, in today's political environment, they don't feel that a positive NLRB decision is something we can count on.

National Agreement for Radio

Given these conditions, President Lee, SSD Director Laura Brownell, SSDEM Director Debbie Newmark, ICSOM Media Chair Bill Foster and more, spoke in favor of exploring a national agreement directly with orchestra managers.

Benefits of negotiating a national agreement with managers include: 1) national agreements are easier to administer; 2) national agreements are less likely to have significant problems because they get a more thorough vetting than local agreements do, and 3) not having a national agreement promotes chaos. President Lee also expressed the concern that if we don't create a national agreement, managers will be approached by motion picture companies, and use Electronic Media Guarantees (EMG) to do a motion picture project.

Concerns

A number of attendees were concerned about a proposed national agreement for radio. Some ICSOM orchestras were apprehensive that such an agreement would undercut their current scale. Various people shared their concern that an agreement would be too much of a straight jacket, and not work in their situation. There seemed to be many calling for flexibility in such an agreement.

At the end of the day, participants expressed interest in a national agreement that would be fair, flexible and pragmatic.

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ROPA

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A Call to Action

Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, ROPA Vice-President

As we start the New Year we find our colleagues of the Jacksonville Symphony in their 50th day of a lockout. The lockout is driven by a small executive board which has determined that the musicians must participate in a "matching grant," more commonly known as financial concessions. The musicians have been asked to match a musician's expense reduction of \$700,000 within the operating budget with the promise that the boards will find additional matching funds. This request comes after the musicians agreed to two years of concessionary cuts since 2001.

In December, a non-binding emergency resolution was passed by the Jacksonville City Council which states, in part: "*A Resolution strongly encouraging the Jacksonville Symphony Association and the Jacksonville Symphony Players Association to submit their contract impasse to an arbitration process to reach a settlement and to resume their concert schedule while negotiations continue; requesting emergency passage; providing an effective date.*"

Negotiations had resumed as of December 14, 2007. The December negotiations revealed that the JSO management was not willing to submit their differences to a neutral arbitrator nor were they willing to meet again until the week of January 8, 2008, unless the musicians were prepared

to accept an offer within the economic confines of what they proposed prior to the lockout.

From the Jacksonville musicians:

"By agreeing to the contract, some of the part-time musicians, those musicians who provide the heft in the big orchestral works, could have to absorb a \$20,000 pay cut every year. By agreeing to the contract, the fulltime musicians suffer a 56 percent cut in their pension contributions. A pension cut is not a 5-year cut - that's a pay cut for life."

Getting the message to the community has been complicated by the fact that the largest newspaper hosts the Jacksonville Symphony performances at the Times Union Center. The Jacksonville Symphony Executive Committee includes members of the Times Union Board of Directors. Some may recall the quote from the Jacksonville Symphony's Board Chair, Mr. Jim Van Vleck, "*I respect our musicians, but there's something about a 37-week year and 20 hours a week that doesn't seem too onerous to me.*"

The orchestra is encouraged by the recent action of the city council as they have struggled in their negotiations with the

continued on next page

**The hotel for our ROPA
2008 Conference has been
selected! It is the Houston
Doubletree Downtown.**

INFORMATION CENTER

- This newsletter is online at:
<http://www.ropaweb.org/> (* see note)
- To subscribe to the ROPA Internet Mailing List, sign in at www.ropaweb.org and click on 'Mailing List.'
The list is open to musicians in ROPA member orchestras, and AFM Local officers for those orchestras.
- The 2008 ROPA Conference will be held July 29-August 1 in Houston, Texas. The Negotiating Orchestras Workshop will be July 28th.

* There may be a delay in getting the newsletters posted onto the web site.



A Call to Action, *continued*

determination of an eight or nine member Executive Committee which is determined to bring the musicians to their knees by canceling the musicians' individual and family health insurance. The Board of Directors has informed the musicians that the season has been canceled through January 7th and if they wish to carry their health insurance they must keep the policy on their own.

As you can imagine, this cancellation is "life changing" for those with ongoing health issues. The holiday timing is interpreted as intentional. It is the hope of the ROPA Board that ROPA orchestras can help these musicians in their desperate times.

CALL TO ACTION:

We are challenging all ROPA orchestras to ask each musician in their organization to donate a minimum of \$10.00 to the Jacksonville Symphony Players' Fund. The money will be used to maintain the musicians' health insurance. If every musician were to meet this challenge, we would generate funds in the approximate amount of \$45,000. Please consider this request as not only a call for immediate assistance but also as a message to the industry that we will stand together during this devastating tactic

In addition, we encourage all to send letters to the JSO Board of Directors' Chair, Jim Van Vleck, in support of the musicians to the Jacksonville Symphony Association: jvanvleck@jaxsymphony.org. Please visit the JSO Musicians' website for the latest information: www.JSOMusicians.org.

Please post your orchestra's donations and letters on the delegate e-list so that we can inspire additional efforts.

Donations can be sent to:
Jacksonville Symphony Players' Association
c/o AFM, Local 444
2030 Schumacher Ave.
Jacksonville FL 32207

Sources: [Jacksonville Business Journal](#)

Minutes: ROPA Executive Board Conference Call

June 9, 2007; 10:05-11:40 a.m.. EST

Attendees

T Fetherston, K Grimes, L Gardner, D. Danders, N. Foofat, L. Jones, A. Morris; G Lasley, , J Potochnic; N. Nelson;

Absent: C Lehmeier, S. Roberts

Proceedings

1) The following ROPA Revenue position statement proposed by K. Grimes was **discussed and approved without objection: Regarding the AFM Revenue Committee Report and Proposal and IEB Recommendation 1**

The ROPA Executive Board unanimously and unequivocally asserts that ROPA needs to oppose any per capita or work dues increases proposed in IEB Recommendation 1 and the AFM Revenue Committee Report and Proposal.

Any new increases in per capita and/or work dues would create hardship for ROPA orchestra members and our brothers and sisters of the AFM membership at large. In addition, many of our locals, who are our first responders vis-à-vis the AFM, would lose enough current members, prospective members and resultant revenue that the very existence of many locals that support ROPA orchestras would be threatened.

In order for ROPA to support any increase in dues to the AFM, the AFM leadership must straightforwardly demonstrate fiscal accountability, responsibility and transparency and a dedicated and proactive plan to keep and increase membership and services. No such detail has been provided to 2007 Convention delegates, and we see no opportunity to do so in a timely manner before the commencement of the Convention June 18, 2007.

KG will send to ROPA, TF will forward to ICSOM, OCSM, TMA, RMA

2) Legislative Committee's report, Convention legislation was discussed and approved without objection

The following items were discussed:

- 3) ROPA Conference schedule and report times
- 4) colleagues who have passed away this year and how to properly acknowledge them
- 5) MAL conference concerns (reports, break out sessions)
- 6) recruitment of new board members
- 7) conference agenda in detail and our role in the conference
- 8) Lehigh Valley
- 9) Atlanta Ballet Resolution: LG will write

Larry Gardner, ROPA Secretary

**HAPPY NEW
YEAR**

from the ROPA Executive Board!

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ROPA Member Orchestras

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Albany Symphony
Ann Arbor Symphony
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Atlanta Opera Orchestra
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Boulder Philharmonic
California Philharmonic
California Symphony Orchestra
Canton Symphony Orchestra
Charleston Symphony Orchestra
Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Orchestra
Cleveland Opera Orchestra
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Erie Philharmonic Orchestra
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Hartford Symphony Orchestra
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Los Angeles Opera Orchestra

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Santa Rosa Symphony
Shreveport Symphony Orchestra

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Symphony Silicon Valley
Toledo Symphony Orchestra
West Virginia Symphony
Wichita Symphony Orchestra

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Allentown Symphony
Atlanta Ballet Orchestra
Flint Symphony Orchestra
Green Bay Symphony Orchestra
Hudson Valley Philharmonic
Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra
Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra
Richardson Symphony Orchestra
Tulsa Opera Orchestra



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

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