

Fall
2021

The Leading Tone

ROPA

Regional
Orchestra
Players'
Association

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

2021 ROPA Conference
Held Online
July 26th—July 29th, 2021

2021 ROPA Conference Report

by Karen Sandene, ROPA Secretary

Earlier this spring when the ROPA board considered the impact of the COVID crisis on our orchestras and the resulting financial hits our musicians and Locals had taken, as well as the hesitancy of many of our members to travel at this point, it became apparent that a second year of a virtual conference would be the best way to hold the annual conference this year. The online conference again allowed for a broader range of orchestra members and Local leadership to participate; over 200 people registered to attend the sessions.



ROPA Secretary
Karen Sandene

On Monday, July 27th, ROPA President Mike Smith welcomed all to the virtual conference, which was dedicated to the memory of Chris Durham, who passed away in the fall of 2020. Smith's remembrances of Durham included his career as a symphonic musician, his early days as a Local officer, his role in the creation of ROPA, and

his time assisting orchestras in the negotiation of contracts.

AFM President Ray Hair then addressed the conference, reflecting on how the music industry was creative in the ways we maintained our relationships with our audiences despite the complete shutdown of the industry. He commented that this is the most critical period in the modern history of the AFM. He celebrated the election of two Democratic senators in Georgia which made it possible to shore up the multi-employer pension funds.

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The Leading Tone

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ROPA

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INFORMATION CENTER

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

Notes From the President

by John Michael Smith, ROPA President

Greetings to everyone following our second successful virtual conference this past July! In this ROPA Conference issue of *The Leading Tone*, ROPA Secretary Karen Sandene gives the conference report. She also has written a report for the October issue of the *International Musician (IM)*. Speaking of the IM, you will see ROPA orchestra musician Alana Wiesing, principal timpanist of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, featured on the cover of the October issue of our monthly AFM publication.

Many of us are beginning our fall seasons with various degrees of COVID protocols and considerations: indoors/outdoors, orchestra musicians and audiences fully vaccinated and/or testing, smaller ensembles, shorter performances, distanced and reduced audiences and masked/unmasked. Regionally, and sometimes even by venue, we have responded to COVID in different degrees: what feels safe and acceptable in one region of the country may not be considered the same in another region. The Delta variant seems to be continuing its surge upwards, with increasing cases and no peak in sight. More breakthrough cases are being reported; being fully vaccinated is not a guarantee that you won't get sick. COVID is not going away as quickly as we would like. We are going to have to continue to practice safety and awareness with this pandemic, and have patience, understanding and caring for one another to get through this challenging time

It was great to see so many of your faces in the tiles during the conference. I so wish we could have met together in person this summer. As for the other AFM player conferences, the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) and the Theatre Musicians Association (TMA) also met virtually again this summer. The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) did a hybrid virtual/in-person conference in Pittsburgh August 10th-14th, which I attended in person. The next week the

AFM held the joint Locals' Conferences Council and Player Conferences Council with the AFM Executive Board in person in Las Vegas. It was great to socialize and have informal conversations, though masked and distanced, at these meetings. One of the things that online conferences do not easily provide is the informal, impromptu conversations that delegates and officers have with each other at breaks, in hospitality suites or in the evenings. We make a good effort at this with our "Happy Hour/Hospitality Suite" on Zoom, but it's just not the same. These informal conversations are every bit as important as the formal presentations that happen during the general sessions and breakout sessions.

With the continued reduction of ROPA annual dues for the next two years, we hope to aid our orchestras and Locals who are facing financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic and its drastic effect on our employment. There are ROPA orchestras that have fallen a year or two behind in their dues, and they will have the opportunity to catch up without late fees by the 2023 ROPA Conference. ROPA's expenses were much less without the in-person conferences the past two years, and we took that into consideration in reducing annual dues.

Thanks to all of you who sent letters and funds to support ROPA's Call to Action for the Musicians of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic. They surpassed their fundraising goals and were able to put on several self-produced concerts on during the summer. They are currently in mediation with the management. And thanks to those of you who participated and encouraged our colleagues in our California orchestras in support of the labor movement in getting out the vote in the governor recall election.

This October we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. We have a colorful history in the labor movement, and I encourage you to learn more about the history of our union. It's surprising that there is not a book about the history of the AFM. Here is a link to the page on the AFM website that



ROPA President
John Michael Smith

(Notes from the President, continued on page 5)

(Conference Report, continued from page 1)

Afa Dworkin, President and Artistic Director of the Sphinx Organization and Titus Underwood, Principal Oboist with the Nashville Symphony lead a discussion on efforts to come up with concrete ways our orchestras could strive for the goals of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Their remarks centered around the position that in order to achieve artistic excellence, it is important to diversify the musical canon, the musicians on the stage and the board rooms.

Monday's session concluded with reports from musician representatives from the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and the Colorado Springs Philharmonic. Dennis Fick and Campbell MacDonald, of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic; and Ann Rule of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, along with Sarah Wilson, President of AFM Local 154, gave a run-down on their orchestras' long-running struggles with their contract negotiations, and actions both orchestras have staged to raise audience awareness of their plight.

Tuesday's session included a report from the ROPA EDI work group, formed after the 2020 conference. Committee chair Casey Bozell (Portland Opera Orchestra and Oregon Ballet Theatre) gave an update on the work of the committee up to this point. Arts and injury prevention advocate Janet Horvath gave a presentation on how to methodically work back into full-time playing.

Wednesday's sessions included Alfonso Pollard, AFM Diversity, Legislative, and Political Director. His address covered a wide range of legislative actions and successes over the past year. He said that top

AFM focuses have been with organizing, to strengthen organized labor's standing in the community, and to help revive an industry destroyed by COVID. Lovie Smith-Wright, chair of the AFM Diversity Committee highlighted the committee's recent work in creating nationwide standards for institutions seeking to add emphasis in implementing EDI in their organizations. Financial expert Bob Zagozda introduced attendees to the intricacies of the financial documents required for the negotiation process. He discussed how to find relevant information on documents, such as IRS forms 990, audited financials, budgets and balance sheets.

On Thursday, Rochelle Skolnick (AFM SSD Director/Assistant to the President/Special Counsel) opened the SSD presentation by acknowledging the collective trauma experienced by musicians during the pandemic. She said the industry is coming back, and our audiences are eager to return to the concert hall. She also celebrated the positive signs coming from Washington, D.C., with recent pro-labor hires at the Department of Labor.

Debbie Newmark, Director of Symphonic Electronic Media, covered in depth recent IMA negotiations and COVID-19 side letters. SSD Negotiator/Organizer/Educator Todd Jelen handled the topic of organizing, especially the importance of campaigns to raise community awareness, and recommended that musicians regularly refresh their organizing skills. Skolnick then spoke at length about safety protocols necessary to have a safe return to the concert hall, for both the performers and the audience. She addressed the topic of

vaccine mandates and the permissibility to require them based upon settled law.

Lawyer Liza Hersch Medina continued the discussion about vaccine mandates and took questions from the delegates on that and other topics.

The conference also heard from representatives from our fellow players' conferences: Meredith Snow (ICSOM), Tony D'Amico (TMA), Marc Sazer (RMA) and Robert Fraser (OCSM-OMOSC).

Following the election of officers, the 2021-22 ROPA Executive Board will include President Mike Smith (Minnesota Opera Orchestra), Vice President Amanda Swain (Houston Ballet and Grand Opera Orchestras), Secretary Karen Sandene (Omaha and Lincoln Symphonies), Treasurer Matthew Oshida (Huntsville Symphony Orchestra), Delegate-at-Large to the AFM Convention Naomi Bendsdorf Frisch (Illinois Philharmonic), and Members-at-Large Casey Bozell (Portland Opera Orchestra and Oregon Ballet Theatre), Lisa Davis (Mississippi Symphony), Christian Green (Ann Arbor Symphony), Sharon Jones (Elgin Symphony Orchestra), Brandon LePage (Flint Symphony and Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra) Beverly Setzer (Symphony Tacoma), Cory Tiffin (Las Vegas Philharmonic) and Steve Wade (Hartford Symphony). We thank outgoing Members-at-Large Kendra Hawley (Palm Beach Opera) and Katie Shields (Arizona Opera Orchestra) for their service to ROPA.

We look forward to seeing everyone in person (really!) in 2022, in Orange County, CA.

Do you have news about your orchestra?
An article to submit?
A letter to the editor?
We'd love to have you contribute
to the *Leading Tone*!
Submit articles to Sharon Jones at
bellsauf@gmail.com

The Leading Tone is the official voice of ROPA and reflects ROPA policy. However, we do appreciate and encourage the contribution of articles and letters by others. These submissions may cover topics on which ROPA has no official position; the opinions expressed therein are solely those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ROPA, its officers or members.

Glimmerglass on the Grass: Getting Back to Work During COVID, and Thriving

by Katrina Smith, Delegate, Glimmerglass Opera Orchestra

For the summer issue of *The Leading Tone*, I described how the Glimmerglass Festival would be holding a different kind of season this year by moving everything but the orchestra outdoors. I am happy to report that it was a resounding success, by all measures! The orchestra was so happy to be back in person, although we did miss seeing some of our colleagues who had different production assignments as a result of spreading the reduced amount of work around. A major donor to the Festival sponsored the building of a beautiful stage on the lawn, with tree trunks rising out of it — and its own weather station on top. Most of the available “squares” on the grass sold out for most of the performances, and the outdoor setting attracted many first-time opera-goers. Audiences were thrilled to be able to hear live music again and enjoyed the shorter performances *en plein-air*. They even stayed through the shows when it rained!

Ah, the weather. The Festival hired a meteorologist to keep track of it. The rule was, “If it rains, the show goes on, but if there is a lightning strike within 10 miles, we stop.” Alas, there *was* rain at times, and not just drizzle. At our first *Magic Flute* rehearsal with the singers on the out-



Above photo: the finale from *Songbird*. Photo below: The Glimmerglass Festival Orchestra rehearses. Photos courtesy of Karli Cadel

door stage, it poured nonstop for the entire 90 minutes. Our hearts went out to those true professionals — including Eric Owens as Sarastro — who sang beautifully in their rain slickers but must have been chilled to the bone. It rained during some performances as well, but fortunately only two shows had to be cancelled outright, and another cut short, by severe weather.

Of course, the logistics of getting the orchestra and singers coordinated when they are around 50 yards away from each other, one indoors and one out, presented a huge potential problem. But the sound engineer was a miracle worker: there was NO delay from the sound monitors for either us or the stage, so we could rely on what we heard. The audience (including musician friends who attended) reported that the sound reinforcement was extremely good.

The Festival had developed a comprehensive set of Health and Safety Guidelines with the help of medical and public health advisors that covered all departments in the company as well as the audience. That document included an extensive bibliography of published articles and webinars, as well as safety protocols of other opera companies. Although vaccination requirement was not part of it, a questionnaire revealed that the entire company had been fully vaccinated by the start of the season, except one person (not in the orchestra) who had a medical disability exemption. So while the distanced single stand set-up from the initial plan was retained, we could at least perform without masks





The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson: Denyce Graves, Mia Athey, Victoria Lawal and Jonathan Pierce Rhodes. Photo courtesy of Karli Cadel

and socialize during the extra long breaks, which was a huge step back to normalcy! Unfortunately, by the last 10 days of the festival, the positivity rate in Otsego county was classified by the CDC as “substantial,” so the masks went back on at that point.

Next summer's season is being planned to take place back inside the opera house, which will be a glorious homecoming. Yet even if that proves impossible, the Festival now has a tested template for presenting opera safely in the great outdoors... in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.

(Notes from the President, continued from page 2)

gives a brief history of the AFM: <https://www.afm.org/125-years-afm-history/>. There is a detailed history of ICSOM in “More Than Meets The Ear” – *How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History* by former Minnesota Orchestra violinist Julie Ayer. ROPA Historian Rachel Cox’s “The Regional Orchestra Players’ Association Thirtieth Anniversary 1984-2014” is available as a PDF on the ROPA website at <http://ropaweb.org/about/history>. On that page you will also find an interesting ROPA YouTube video that I would encourage every ROPA delegate and officer to watch. It was originally created for recruitment purposes in 2016, but its message is just as valuable as a reminder of where we have been and why we are here.

The ROPA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup invites all ROPA musicians to participate in their upcoming discussions and in creating action in our orchestras and communities. There will be an announcement on the ROPA email lists soon about upcoming meetings.

I’m wishing all of you a safe and fun opening to your orchestra seasons!

We are stronger together!

2021 ROPA Conference Resolutions

Passed July 28, 2021

Resolution N^o. 1

Subject: *Resolution Remembering Chris Durham, Founder of ROPA*

Chris Durham Resolution

Whereas, On August 22, 2020, Chris Durham, founding member of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") passed away; and

Whereas, Chris Durham was a violinist, unionist, contract negotiator, conservationist, family man, and friend to all; and

Whereas, Chris Durham was a leader in the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), having been one of the youngest local vice presidents for Local 103 in Columbus Ohio at the age of 25, and having worked in the Symphonic Services Division as negotiator and briefly as Director since 1989; and

Whereas, Chris Durham helped to found ROPA, served on the ROPA Executive Board, and attended every ROPA conference from 1984 - 2019; and

Whereas, Over the years, Chris Durham personally assisted many ROPA orchestras in the successful negotiations of their Collective Bargaining Agreements, supported their labor actions, and was a champion of ROPA orchestras; and

Whereas, Chris Durham was a mentor and friend to many of the approximately six thousand musicians who play in ROPA orchestras; and

Whereas, ROPA is grateful for Chris Durham's immeasurable contribution to the growth of unionism, solidarity, and the resulting increase in wages and working conditions for ROPA orchestras, and saddened by the loss of this formidable force in our industry; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") will remember Chris Durham as a founding member and key contributor to ROPA's mission; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA hereby expresses its condolences to Chris's wife Lisa and their son Jacob and to all who mourn his loss; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA pledges to honor Chris's memory as we work to fulfill our purpose, to promote the interests of our Member Orchestras and their musicians, to enhance communications among those orchestras and with the Federation, its Locals and its Conferences, and to pursue the

general welfare and artistic well-being of our members.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N^o. 2

Subject: *Resolution Condemning the Management of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic for failing to bargain in good faith*

Colorado Springs Philharmonic Resolution

Whereas, In April of 2020, the musicians of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic ("the Musicians"), members of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") and represented by Local 154 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), entered into a five-year Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") with the Management of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic ("Management"), which included wages and working conditions that were fairly and lawfully bargained for; and

Whereas, At the end of the 2019-20 season, Management abruptly and unlawfully cancelled the CBA, leaving the Musicians without work or pay, and placing blame on not being able to present performances during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite having bargained return to work safety protocols and with full knowledge that venues were open with safety measures in place; and

Whereas, Management then planned to present performances, and offered work to the Musicians without the protections of the CBA and on a per-service basis, rather than fulfilling the guaranteed service minimum salary provided for in the CBA; and

Whereas, On August 17, September 1, and October 2, 2020, Local 154 of the AFM filed grievances and on March 5, 2021, Local 154 filed an Unfair Labor Practice; and

Whereas, On March 6, 2021, the AFM placed the Colorado Springs Philharmonic on the International Unfair List; and

Whereas, A neutral arbitrator has been selected to decide whether the CBA was lawfully cancelled, and in the meantime, Management has offered no work in the 2021-22 season to the musicians even though the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic has been diminished and the orchestra's primary concert hall is open without any restriction on audience capacity; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Asso-

ciation ("ROPA") hereby stands in solidarity with the Musicians of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and commends their fortitude in the face of adversity; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA hereby condemns the Management of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic for using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to cancel the Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") they agreed to and to keep its musicians from earning a living during a global crisis; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA urges the Management of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic to honor the CBA and bring the musicians back to work immediately.

Submitted by: Ann Rule, Delegate, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, and The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N^o. 3

Subject: *Resolution Commending Congress for Passage of COVID-Relief Legislation*

FFCRA, CARES Act, and ARPA Resolution

Whereas, In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, closing large performance venues and putting orchestral musicians out of work; and

Whereas, The resulting lack of work for musicians exacerbated the failing health of the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund (AFM-EPF); and

Whereas, Congress acted quickly to pass the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which together provided paid sick leave and increased unemployment insurance benefits which were a lifeline to orchestral musicians; and

Whereas, Throughout 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to keep our theaters closed, necessitating further relief; and

Whereas, On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA"), which not only provided additional direct payments to unemployed orchestral musicians, such as increased unemployment compensation for traditional and mixed income earners, stimulus payments, and direct interest-free loans to artists and venues, but also provided an important and necessary solution to our pension crisis by providing for direct payments to struggling

multi-employer pension funds like the AFM-EPF; and

Whereas, Members of Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") and International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians ("ICSOM") rely on the solvency of the AFM-EPF for their retirement; and

Whereas, Members of ROPA and ICSOM, along with staff of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), participated in multiple campaigns to support the passage of ARPA; and

Whereas, The benefits of the FFCRA, CARES Act, and ARPA are instrumental in helping orchestral musicians weather this difficult time; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") hereby thanks each and every musician who took time to contact members of Congress and encourage them to pass the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA"); and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA commends and thanks the staff of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), including but not limited to Legislative-Political Director Alfonso Pollard, for their hard work and tireless efforts in spreading the word about this important legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA commends the United States Congress on the passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ("FFCRA"), the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security ("CARES") Act, and especially ARPA, which will have a positive impact on the lives of performing musicians and especially AFM members for years to come.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N^o. 4

Subject: *Resolution Setting Forth ROPA's Work to Increase, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Amongst its Member Orchestras and in its Mission Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Resolution*

Whereas, Systemic racism affects Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") orchestras at every level; and

Whereas, Centuries of American orchestral culture has perpetuated racialized hierarchies in performance, education, and community outreach; and

Whereas, At the 2020 Conference of the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA"), which

was held virtually, the Conference Delegates adopted a Resolution pledging to form a ROPA Diversity Committee with the goal of exploring how ROPA can help address this systemic problem; and

Whereas, Accordingly, the ROPA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion ("EDI") Workgroup, was formed during the 2020-21 season; and

Whereas, The ROPA EDI Workgroup has defined its mission as

"The ROPA EDI Workgroup strives to move ROPA forward in the areas of awareness, education, and activism for racial and cultural diversity. We work and communicate together to recognize and counteract implicit bias, create a culturally diverse and equitable work environment, and promote systemic change within our industry"; and

Whereas, The ROPA EDI Workgroup has identified several goals, including

- becoming a central, reliable resource for the benefit of all ROPA orchestras;
- recommending and helping to implement best practices of hiring musicians, music directors, administrators, and board members to affect change at every level;
- working with ROPA orchestras to achieve measurable ways of diversifying repertoire and programming, and targeting educational, outreach, and community programs; and

Whereas, The ROPA EDI Workgroup continues to meet to discuss ways in which ROPA can assist its member orchestras in engaging in this important work; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") hereby applauds and commends the work of the ROPA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion ("EDI") Workgroup and encourages participation and contribution from all of its members; and be it further

Resolved, That the ROPA EDI Workgroup is dedicated to addressing and counteracting the effects of these complicated histories and regressive practices with the goal of making the work environment of all ROPA orchestras a safe and equitable place; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of the ROPA Executive Board, as the elected officials of ROPA, pledge to support the work of the EDI Workgroup and further its work in every possible way.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution N^o. 5

Subject: *Resolution Congratulating the Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic on the Restoration of their Season*

Fort Wayne Philharmonic Resolution

Whereas, When the COVID-19 pandemic erupted in the United States in March of 2020, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic ("FWP") and its musicians, members of Local 58 of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), were near an agreement for a successor Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") after 10 months of bargaining; and

Whereas, In April of 2020, the FWP withdrew its bargaining proposal, which included wage increases and other favorable conditions, citing changed circumstances due to the pandemic; and

Whereas, In July of 2020, the FWP announced the furlough of all musicians effective August 31, 2020, using the global pandemic as an excuse to suspend operations and attempt to diminish the pay and working conditions for the musicians of the orchestra; and

Whereas, In September of 2020, the FWP presented a bargaining proposal which sought to completely undermine the size, quality, and professionalism of the orchestra; and

Whereas, Several Unfair Labor Practices were filed in opposition to these unlawful practices by the FWP; and

Whereas, The Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic fought tirelessly against this effort to gut their livelihoods by bargaining in good faith, and engaging in rallies, pickets, and other job actions to raise awareness for this unjustified action by the orchestra's management; and

Whereas, For the entire 2020-21 season, the Musicians remained on furlough without any pay; and

Whereas, On May 1, 2021, a rally was held in Fort Wayne in support of the musicians which drew huge crowds from Fort Wayne and participants from all over the country; and

Whereas, As a result of the above actions, the parties returned to the bargaining table and were able to agree on terms of a one year contract; and

Whereas, The FWP has now agreed to pay musicians for twenty-eight (28) weeks of work during the indoor season and seven (7) weeks in the summer, which is an increase in total annual weeks from the previous guarantee; and

(Resolutions, continued on page 10)

(Resolutions, continued from page 13)

Whereas, The FWP also agreed to give musicians significant “furlough offset” payments after suffering through a year without pay; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association (“ROPA”) hereby stands in solidarity with the Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and commends their fortitude in the face of adversity; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA looks forward to the continued growth and prosperity of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

Submitted by: Dennis Fick, Delegate, Fort Wayne Philharmonic and The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution Nº. 6

Subject: *Resolution Thanking the IMA negotiating committee and especially Deborah Newmark and Rochelle Skolnick for their tireless advocacy on behalf of musicians during the pandemic through their work on the IMA Side Letter Agreement*

IMA Resolution

Whereas, In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, closing large performance venues and putting orchestral musicians out of work; and

Whereas, Many member orchestras of the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association (“ROPA”) thereafter wished to share both new and archived content through streaming platforms in order to keep their musicians working and in front of their audiences; and

Whereas, The sharing of orchestral media content through streaming platforms is governed by the Integrated Media Agreement (“IMA”), which is negotiated between the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (“AFM”) and the Employers’ Electronic Media Association (“EMA”); and

Whereas, Members of the EMA expressed their desire for leniency on the terms of the IMA during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, After countless hours of negotiations

and meetings with the AFM IMA negotiations committee, which includes AFM staff and rank-and-file musicians, including members of the ROPA Media Committee, an IMA side letter was developed which allowed orchestras to more widely create and distribute streaming content in exchange for guaranteed wages and benefits to the musicians; and

Whereas, AFM Symphonic Services Director and Special Counsel Rochelle Skolnick and AFM Director of Symphonic Electronic Media Deborah Newmark worked tirelessly to draft the IMA side letter, implement its terms, and get it ratified by many orchestras around the United States; and

Whereas, The IMA side letter has allowed ROPA orchestras to provide work, wages, and creative outlets for their musicians during this difficult time; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association (“ROPA”) hereby applauds the work of the Integrated Media Agreement (“IMA”) negotiating committee in developing and agreeing to the IMA side letter; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA hereby and sincerely thanks Rochelle Skolnick and Deborah Newmark for their dedication and service to our musicians.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

Resolution Nº. 7

Subject: *Resolution Urging The United States Senate to Pass the PRO Act*

Protecting the Right to Organize (“PRO”) Act Resolution

Whereas, On March 9, 2021, the United States House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (“PRO”) Act, a bill which “expands various labor protections related to employees’ rights to organize and collectively bargain in the workplace”; and

Whereas, The PRO Act, if passed, would provide several important expansions to Federal Labor Law which would benefit the union musicians of the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association (“ROPA”), including, but not limited to:

- It would be unlawful for employers to coerce employees into attending anti-union meetings;
- Unions would lawfully be able to collect contributions towards the cost of representation from non-members in right-to-work states;
- Elections for union representation could occur at a location other than the place of employment, including remotely and via the internet; and

Whereas, The PRO Act would benefit all workers in the United States, which in turn would improve wages and working conditions for all, including members of ROPA; and

Whereas, Members of ROPA and the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (“ICSOM”), along with the staff of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (“AFM”), have supported the passage of the PRO Act through efforts such as phone banking and direct contact with Congress; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association (“ROPA”) hereby thanks each and every musician who took time to contact members of Congress and encourage them to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (“PRO”) Act; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA commends and thanks the staff of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (“AFM”), including but not limited to Legislative-Political Director Alfonso Pollard, for their hard work and tireless efforts in spreading the word about this important legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA urges the United States Senate to pass the PRO Act, which will have a positive impact on the lives of performing musicians and all working Americans.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/842>



Regional Orchestra Players’ Association

ROPA Guiding Principles

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 6,000 musicians and over 90 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.



ROPA Orchestras, 2021

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.

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 Player Conferences, Locals, Orchestra Committees, and Musicians.

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.

What are the results of the work of ROPA?

- Inclusion in a labor community;
- Better professional lives and contracts than we otherwise had;
- Solidary 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.

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



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
Annapolis Symphony
Ann Arbor Symphony
Arizona Opera Orchestra
Atlanta Ballet Orchestra
Atlanta Opera Orchestra
Austin Symphony Orchestra
Ballet West Orchestra
Binghamton Philharmonic
Boise Philharmonic
Boston Ballet Orchestra
Boulder Philharmonic
California Symphony Orchestra
Canton Symphony Orchestra
Cape Symphony
Central City Opera Orchestra
Chattanooga Symphony & Opera
Orchestra
Chicago Sinfonietta
Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra
Dallas Opera Orchestra
Dayton Philharmonic

Delaware Symphony Orchestra
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra
East Texas Symphony Orchestra
Elgin Symphony Orchestra
Erie Philharmonic Orchestra
Eugene Symphony
Fort Wayne Philharmonic
Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra
Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra
Hartford Symphony Orchestra
Houston Ballet Orchestra
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Huntsville Symphony Orchestra
Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
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
Marin Symphony
Memphis Symphony Orchestra
Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra

Minnesota Opera Orchestra
Mississippi Symphony Orchestra
Monterey Symphony
New Haven Symphony Orchestra
New Mexico Philharmonic
New West Symphony Orchestra
Oakland Symphony
Omaha Symphony Orchestra
Opera Philadelphia
Oregon Ballet Theatre
Orchestra Iowa
Pacific Symphony
Palm Beach Opera Orchestra
Pasadena Symphony Orchestra
Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra
Portland Opera Orchestra
Portland Symphony Orchestra
Reading Symphony Orchestra
Rhode Island Philharmonic
Richmond Symphony
Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera
Santa Barbara Symphony
Santa Rosa Symphony
Sarasota Orchestra
South Bend Symphony

Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra
Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra
Spokane Symphony Orchestra
Symphony Silicon Valley
Symphony Tacoma
Toledo Symphony Orchestra
Tucson Symphony Orchestra
Vermont Symphony Orchestra
West Virginia Symphony
Wichita Symphony Orchestra
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Associate Members

Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra
El Paso Symphony
Flint Symphony Orchestra
Glimmerglass Opera Orchestra
Hudson Valley Philharmonic
Lincoln Symphony Orchestra
Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra
Opera San Jose
Pittsburgh Ballet Orchestra
Tri-Cities Opera Orchestra
Tulsa Opera