

Spring
2022

The Leading Tone

ROPA

Regional
Orchestra
Players'
Association

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

Notes from the President
by John Michael Smith, ROPA President

The ROPA Executive Board and Members-at-Large during the Midwest meeting in January—both in person and online! Left to right, in person: ROPA President Mike Smith, Lisa Davis, Beverly Setzer, Katie Shields, Delegate-at-Large to the AFM Convention Naomi Bensdorf Frisch, Karen Sandene and Stephen Wade. Left to right, onscreen: Christian Green, Brandon LePage, Vice President Amanda Swain, Cory Tiffin and Sharon Jones. Photo courtesy of Mike Smith.

Spring is trying hard to get started here in Minnesota; we are slowly getting a few warmer sunny days, but followed by days of wind, rain, snow, hail, sleet and everything else that falls from the sky. I know spring will be here eventually, but it sure seems to be taking its time this year.

Our communities around our orchestras largely seem to have the pandemic in the rear-view mirror, and I'm taking note of many orchestras revising their COVID protocols and moving to fewer restrictions on vaccinations, boosters, masking and distancing. And I'm also hearing that yet another variant is beginning to show up around the country. I'm afraid we are not out of the woods yet.

With continued concern for health and safety for our AFM members, and the additional hurdle that our Canadian brothers and sisters have in crossing the border during this time, the AFM has rescheduled the 102nd Convention to June of 2023. Resolutions and active participation at the convention by our Locals and the Player Conferences will have to wait until 2023.

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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.

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I just received notice that we will begin preparing for negotiations for a new Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) in the coming month. The current agreement with the Employers' Electronic Media Association (EMA) will expire June 30th. The ROPA Electronic Media Committee works alongside the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, Symphonic Services Division of the AFM and President Ray Hair and others on the International Executive Board on this most important live recording agreement for symphony, opera and ballet. With the increased and creative use of media and the side letters that created temporary changes during COVID, these negotiations are likely to present some challenges and opportunities that would not have occurred if there had not been a pandemic.

I am pleased to announce that Alana Wiesing, principal timpanist of the Tucson Symphony, is going to be leading the ROPA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Workgroup. She is an enthusiastic and passionate advocate around these issues, and is also President and a founder of Network for Diversity in Concert Percussion. She was featured in the October issue of *INTERNATIONAL MUSICIAN*. We are looking forward to working with Alana, and thank ROPA Executive Board Member-at-Large Casey Bozell for her leadership in getting the workgroup started. Any ROPA orchestra musician is welcome to join the Workgroup. Check ropa-discussion@googlegroups.com, our ROPA email thread, for notices about Zoom meetings.

ROPA is again offering a scholarship to cover travel, room and board to members of ROPA orchestras who would like to attend LABOR NOTES, which will be held in person June 17-19 in Chicago. Labor Notes is a media and organizing project that has been the voice of



ROPA President
John Michael Smith



Mike at his swearing-in as President with former ROPA President Carla Lehmeier-Tatum, Madison, WI, 2016.
Photo courtesy of Mike Smith.

union activists and putting the **movement** back in the labor movement since 1979. Apply [here](#) or contact me or ROPA Delegate-at-Large to the AFM Convention Naomi Bensdorf Frisch if you are interested in attending!

Speaking of the labor movement, I hope that you have been noticing stories of organizing at Starbucks and Amazon in the news. Union election filings are up more than 50% during the previous six months compared to the same period last year. The pandemic has given us time to pause for thought about how we live and work, what is important, and what we can do to make things better.

Our 39th Annual ROPA Conference will be held at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa Hotel Tuesday through Thursday, July 26-28, and hosted by Local 7, Orange County Musicians' Union. There will be an AFM SSD Negotiations Workshop on Monday, July 25. Orchestras that

are negotiating in the coming year are eligible to have their hotel room cost and per diem for one night covered by the AFM for attending the workshop.

I will be coming to the end of my time as President of ROPA with this year's conference in Orange County. I have greatly enjoyed the tremendous honor and privilege of serving as President these past six years. The many friends I have made and



Uber ride with Debbie Newmark, Mike, Meredith Snow and Rochelle Skolnick in Miami leaving a New World Symphony Union education presentation, 2020. Photo courtesy of Mike Smith.

the colleagues I have worked with in my 17 years of ROPA have been so important and special for me, and I will miss the people and the work very much. It is time for me to move on with other areas of my life. I hope some of you will please consider running for election to the ROPA Executive Board. There will be four Member-at-Large positions open, as well as President and Treasurer.

We are stronger together!

ROPA Welcomes the New Leader of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup

by Alana Wiesing, Tucson Symphony Orchestra

I'm incredibly excited and humbled to serve as the new leader for the ROPA EDI Workgroup, where we discover, discuss, and advocate for equitable, diverse, and inclusive protocols and principles to implement in our orchestras. I deeply value the ideals and importance of this group, and I'm looking forward to continuing as well as building upon the wonderful work that has been done. Our biggest goals in the coming months are solidifying our mission statement, spreading that mission to every ROPA orchestra, and increasing musician involvement and outreach. So, if you're interested in this work and would like to contribute your

thoughts and ideas, or if you have a colleague who is, please consider joining the group or asking them to join. And please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions!

Alana Wiesing is a multi-faceted and award-winning timpanist and percussionist from Phoenix, AZ. She is currently the Principal Timpanist of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra (TSO), an Adjunct Professor of Percussion at the University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music, an alumni faculty member at the National Orchestral Institute + Festival (NOI+F), and the President and Chair of the board of directors for the Network for Diversi-

ty in Concert Percussion, a non-profit organization that serves as a resource and support system for aspiring professional percussionists from underrepresented and underserved groups in an effort to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the concert percussion community. She has presented lectures and led discussions about EDI at the University of Florida, NOI+F, the Percussive Arts Society, and the Virtual Percussion Music Festival, and she has appeared on numerous podcasts and platforms to talk about these ideals as well. Additionally, Alana is the chair of the program advisory committee at the TSO, and she is a member of the executive board of the Tucson Federation of Musicians (Local 33).

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.

Using the Conductor Evaluation Bank

By Lisa Davis, Member-at-Large and Conductor Evaluation Bank Administrator

The ROPA Conductor Evaluation Bank is a valuable resource for organizations engaged in a search for a new music director. Any time a guest conductor comes to lead your orchestra, a thorough (and confidential!) evaluation will provide necessary input for making a decision on a permanent choice.

While the instructions regarding the conductor evaluation survey are on the website at ropaweb.org, it's helpful for all musicians besides the delegates to understand the process of using this tool.

Start by going to the website. There are two ways to access the evaluations. First, there is a drop-down menu that says CONDUCTOR EVALUATIONS. Hover your cursor over this, and choose the drop-down option that says "For Delegates". Or, you can go to DELEGATES and select the drop-down option of "Conductor Evaluations". Both options will lead you to a log-in page. If you don't have a log-in and password, contact Secretary Karen Sandene.

Once you're logged in, try either option to access the evaluations. Once on that page, you will scroll down to the "Procedure for requesting a survey link". You must fill out all the fields, including the emails of all of your colleagues in the orchestra, which will be kept confidential. The musicians' email addresses will be obtained by the delegate and sent to the ROPA administrator. The musicians will be asked to complete the form within one week. A

reminder will be sent a few days before the deadline to only those musicians who have not completed the survey.

Management may access the results by completing an online request form and sending to the administrator. The form stipulates that management agrees to keep this information confidential, and that the musicians, the pertinent AFM local and ROPA are immune from any claims of misuse of these results. Information from ICSOM and OCSM surveys is also available; those requests would be made to the administrator as well.

Some FAQs...

Are musicians allowed to see the results?

No. This is only for management's usage. Once management fills out the liability request form, they may share it with whomever they want. If someone were to speak ill of one of the conductors and that maestro found out, the conductor could sue ROPA because ROPA's name is on the evaluation survey. OCSM and ICSOM follow the same policy.

Can the amount of time for responses be extended beyond one week?

Yes, upon requesting permission from the bank administrator.

I have a musician who forgot to fill it out. Can they access it after the survey has been closed?

Yes. The administrator will send a link for the survey to the delegate.

Can a musician ask to do the evaluation again or retract what they submitted?

Yes. Have that musician ask the delegate to contact the administrator. The delegate will provide the email of that musician, the administrator will delete the comments and the musician can access the link from the original email to re-do the survey.

What if one of the musicians hasn't gotten the email?

If there is someone in your orchestra who has not received this email, the delegate will provide them with a web link to the survey. Ask those musicians to check their spam and junk mail folders first. It's a good idea for delegates to send the musicians a heads-up email letting them know a survey is coming.

Is there a possibility of a musician submitting multiple reviews?

No, a musician cannot take the survey more than once from the same device. The surveys are also reviewed to make sure only one response is received by each musician.

If an orchestra does their own evaluation in-house, can those results be submitted to ROPA?

No. The only evaluations ROPA keeps in the bank are its own.

If you have any further questions or comments about the evaluation bank, please don't hesitate to contact me at ropaceba1@gmail.com.



Regional Orchestra Players' Association

The War in Ukraine: The Memphis Symphony Orchestra Offers Assistance

By Sandy D'Amato, Delegate

The Memphis Symphony Orchestra just completed our long-delayed performances of Beethoven Symphony #9, featuring a 170-member chorus from Memphis and Oxford, Mississippi (we performed in both cities). Among the highlights was the singing of the national anthems of both the United States and Ukraine. Our principal clarinetist and orchestra committee chairman, Andre Dyachenko, is from Ukraine. He posted the following message on Facebook after he and his wife, violinist Yennifer Correia, helped create a

nonprofit organization to help his homeland. If you'd like to help, please go to <https://ukrainianassistance.org>.

"Dear friends!

"Last night will go in my memory as one of the most memorable moments in my life as a musician. Hearing my [Memphis Symphony Orchestra](#) family stand in support of [#Ukrainians](#) who are fighting not only for their own freedom, but are making a stand against a bloodthirsty monster

on behalf of all democratic societies around the world, brought tears to my eyes. I am trying to do as much as I can but I cannot do it alone, so I'm asking you to stand by me and help the Ukrainian people by donating any amount you feel appropriate to our newly created nonprofit Ukrainian Assistance Inc.

"I would like to thank co-founders Phil MacNaughton, my wife Yennifer Correia and Chris MacNaughton for all your help in making this possible."

SAVE THE DATE! 2022 ROPA Conference

Tuesday, July 26th—Thursday, July 28th

Negotiating Orchestras Workshop: Monday, July 25th

Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa Hotel, Orange County, CA

Host: AFM Local 7 Orange County Musicians' Union

Offices up for election: Four (4) Member-at-Large positions; President; Treasurer



Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa Hotel, Orange County, CA. Photo courtesy of Mike Smith

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Atlanta Opera Orchestra
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Boise Philharmonic
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Cape Symphony
Central City Opera Orchestra
Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Orchestra
Chicago Sinfonietta
Colorado Springs Philharmonic Orchestra
Dallas Opera Orchestra
Dayton Philharmonic

Delaware Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Opera Orchestra
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra
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Elgin Symphony Orchestra
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Eugene Symphony
Fort Wayne Philharmonic
Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra
Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra
Hartford Symphony Orchestra
Houston Ballet Orchestra
Houston Grand Opera Orchestra
Huntsville Symphony Orchestra
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Lexington Philharmonic
Long Beach Symphony Orchestra
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Memphis Symphony Orchestra

Minnesota Opera Orchestra
Mississippi Symphony Orchestra
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National Philharmonic Orchestra
New Haven Symphony Orchestra
New Mexico Philharmonic
New West Symphony Orchestra
Oakland Symphony
Omaha Symphony Orchestra
Opera Philadelphia
Orchestra Iowa
Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra
Palm Beach Opera Orchestra
Pasadena Symphony Orchestra
Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra
Portland Opera Orchestra
Portland Symphony Orchestra
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