

ROPA Electronic Media Committee
2023 ROPA Conference Report – Atlanta, GA

Since the previous conference in Orange County in 2022, the ROPA Electronic Media Committee has been continuing to work with our AFM and ICSOM colleagues on a successor agreement to the 2019-22 Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) between the AFM and the Employers' Electronic Media Association (EMA) which expired June 30, 2022. Orchestras that were signed on to that agreement continue to work under the terms and conditions of that agreement until such time as a new Agreement is reached, as do other orchestras who have signed an Individual Employer IMA.

The negotiating team, made up of Symphonic Services Division Staff, other AFM staff, Local Officers, the ROPA Electronic Media Committee, and the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee, held several caucuses during the past year, to prepare for our meetings with the EMA.

IMA/AFM Negotiations Zoom caucuses:
September 19, 2022, October 17, 2022, November 21, 2022

In-person Negotiations with the EMA:
November 27-28, 2022 NYC at the AFM offices. AFM proposal delivered
February 5-6, 2023 NYC at the AFM offices.

The AFM's position during these negotiations has been to continue to use the document that we negotiated in 2019, which barely went into effect before COVID-19 shut down most of our orchestra work. The AFM and EMA achieved several side-letters to broaden and expand the IMA during the COVID period, to create more opportunities for work when live performances were not possible. These side letters have all sunset with the end of the 2022 Agreement. The EMA has continued to push for as much media as they can get for little or no additional cost to them, and with a loss of rights and fair compensation for our members.

We are very close to achieving an agreement on a new IMA as of early July, which will tentatively go through June of 2026. A few issues are still under discussion, so no handshake as yet at the time of this report!

An interesting footnote to the period of the last IMA, which roughly coincides with the reduction of live orchestra performances during COVID-19, is the growth of the number of orchestras that have become signatory to the IMA:

Here are some dates and numbers of signatory reports that I have collected:

May, 2019 – 94 members of the EMA (37 ROPA orchestras)

October, 2020 – 115 members (46 ROPA orchestras)

July, 2023 – 126 members (includes 55 ROPA orchestras, including 4 who previously were signatory to the Individual Employer IMA who have joined the EMA and are waiting to ratify the successor agreement.

For those orchestras who have signed an Individual Employer IMA:

January, 2017 – 40 orchestras (19 ROPA orchestras). At that time two ROPA orchestras with Individual Employer agreements were in the process of joining the EMA.

July, 2023 – 67 orchestras (31 ROPA Orchestras). Four orchestras with independent IMAs have recently joined the EMA, but are still using the Individual Employer IMA (see above). They will ratify with the other EMA orchestras when we have a new IMA.

Respectfully submitted,

The ROPA Electronic Media Committee:

Naomi Bendsdorf Frisch, Illinois Philharmonic

Taylor Brown, Chattanooga Symphony and Opera; President, Local 80

Nathaniel Chase, Allentown Symphony

Mike Smith, Chair, Minnesota Opera Orchestra

Stephen Wade, *ex officio*, Hartford Symphony