Welcome, delegates and guests, to the 2024 Conference of the Regional Orchestra Players’ Association! This event is indeed a special one, celebrating the 40th anniversary of ROPA’s founding. In September of 1984, representatives from 13 orchestras gathered for a symposium in Columbus, Ohio to talk about what musicians in regional groups needed to make the struggle for better wages and working conditions easier and more productive. We have assembled every year since, even virtually during the pandemic, and it’s safe to say we have made a huge difference in the lives of the musicians we represent.

You may be momentarily confused - didn’t we celebrate being 40 last year in Atlanta? We certainly did. But, since ROPA was founded at its first conference, last year’s was the 40th one, while 2024 is our anniversary year. Regardless, we will always be stronger together.

We are hosted this year by AFM Local 6, led by President Kale Cummings and Secretary-Treasurer Beth Zare. We on the ROPA Executive board would like to thank them for all they are doing for us. The Bay Area is a special place, as anyone who comes here realizes as soon as one sees the dramatic beauty of the landscape and the remarkable vitality of the City and the surrounding region. Six ROPA orchestras are here, providing stages for a large number of talented, hard working professional musicians. We are proud to call them colleagues, and we continue to work to make their lives, and the lives of almost 6000 other musicians around the country better.

Our agenda this year includes presentations a wide variety of topics, from health and wellness to organizing, from diversity initiatives to sexual harassment, and from disability law to financial help. In addition, we are pleased to offer the leadership of the AFM a chance to connect with its membership, and we once again thank the Symphonic Services Division for its Negotiating Workshop and other supporting reports. We hope that all our our attendees, presenters, auditors, and guests find every moment of the Conference enjoyable, informative, and useful.

In Solidarity,

Steve Wade

President, Regional Orchestra Players’ Association