

Freelance Musicians Association Conference Report

I'd like to thank ROPA for this opportunity to share what we've been up to.

Our first few months have been incredibly exciting. We started our official first year by drafting our first iteration of our bylaws and holding our first election. I am very grateful to everyone who participated in drafting the document that we eventually adopted and there was a lot of great collaboration along the way. Right out of the gate, we were confronted with the decision making process and had to choose what our initial path would be as we filed for our tax status and formalized what our process would be going forward.

Within a few months, we had created our first draft of bylaws and elected officers and a board of directors. There was a sense of urgency from the proximity to the convention in Ottawa, and the fact that we were all aware that time would not be unlimited between our first official actions and when we'd all be together. We would not have been able to achieve all of our goals without the stalwart support of Freelance Services Director Wages Argott, who was tireless in his efforts to provide whatever help he could as we were setting up something that was going to be such a new venture.

The convention was exciting for all of us representing the FMA. Our Vice President Leni Kreienberg and our Secretary-Treasurer Milton Salazar had an amazing experience meeting everyone and it was a thrill to be able to address the body. Our group received so much support over the course of the week while we were all together, and it was a thrill to be able to speak with as many people as we could. I know the three of us had tears in our eyes more than once as we couldn't help but feel the solidarity from everyone across the federation. It truly was an amazing experience.

Now that we've returned, we have begun to chip away at our long term goals. We have a growing list of committees, including education, communication, jazz and P2/Canadian issues, and each of these groups have identified education as a main priority. To that end, we've begun to create an exciting offering of tools for everyone across the federation. Our education and committee work has so far included topics such as organizing basics, tools for bandleaders and ways we can strengthen our web presence. We have also committed to strengthen a few of the AFM's resources as we can, primarily Venuology and we are excited to start collaborations with the education and organizing departments. We are also hoping to have an expanding toolkit for officers including orientation topics for freelancers and we have had some great conversations about organizing around long term benefits such as payroll options and health care.

We are working hard to streamline all of the new ideas and excitement. We've certainly had our share of growing pains over the first few months, but we've also learned a lot about working with each other. In the few short weeks since the convention, we've seen a lot of great participation and heard a lot of great ideas.

If you would like to join, or would like to share our group with a colleague or friend, please visit our website at afmfreelance.org. Our conference is set up for individual membership, and our dues are (for now) an astronomical five dollars.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share

Nate Omdal
President
Freelance Players Association