



UNA VOCE

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The Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) is the voice of Canadian professional orchestral musicians. OCSM's mission is to uphold and improve the working conditions of professional Canadian orchestral musicians, to promote communication among its members, and to advocate on behalf of the Canadian cultural community.

Editorial

by Barbara Hankins

Why do you have to retire at 65? Why can't you start at 70? You know, like wine. Why can't music be that way? My new band, we're playing stuff that's never been done before.

— Herbie Mann

For those of us nearing the end of our careers, it was reassuring to hear from Michael Wright at this year's OCSM conference about the weakness of evidence claiming performance declines with age. Older workers do as well or better than younger ones. However that's not to say that older workers shouldn't be given options that allow a lessening of the demands of their work, and the CPO now has contractual language to that effect (see Rob McCosh's article in this issue). Michael stressed that individual musicians must initiate and approve any decision to reduce workload; they must not be coerced.



Tom Kay, principal flute Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Photo courtesy of Sherpa Marketing

And speaking of long-tenured musicians, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony is celebrating the fortieth season of two of our members, Tom Kay and Faith Levene.

Perhaps there are colleagues in your orchestras who have also served a long time. Consider taking them for lunch, hearing their stories, and submitting your writing to me by February 15 for inclusion in the next *Una Voce*.

I know you'll enjoy hearing about the National Arts Centre Orchestra's travels to China and Orchestra symphonique de Montréal's visit to Lac-Mégantic. Both orchestras brought beautiful music, joy, and goodwill, and came home with unforgettable memories.

Forty Years and How Many "Sleigh Rides"?

By Barbara Hankins

Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony

Two of my colleagues are celebrating their fortieth season with the kws this year. A remarkable feat in my opinion, and I was curious to know their thoughts on being in the same job for that length of time.

Tom Kay, principal flute, had been freelancing in New York and Los Angeles when he got a call from his mother saying that he was wanted for a job in Canada. After a summer playing in the Stratford Festival Chamber Ensemble, Music Director Raffi Armenian asked him to join the kws – and as they say, the rest is history.

Tom spoke with admiration of how working with Raffi was so important to his career. Under Raffi, Tom learned the core symphonic repertoire as well as a wide range of other genres including opera and chamber music.

Some highlights of Tom's forty years include concerts with amazing musicians such as John Vickers, Lois Marshall, Lily Kraus, Maureen Forrester, Joshua Bell, and Harry Belafonte. The opening of the Centre in the Square in 1980 proved the community's support for the orchestra and the arts in general. Tom believes that live music continues to survive since recordings just can't do justice to musicians' performances.

Many non-musicians find it unusual that symphonic musicians continue to take lessons once they have a job.

Tom stressed how important mentors are. After starting in kws he continued lessons with Lois Shaefer in Boston and Bernie Goldberg in Pittsburgh. “There is never an end of what you want to improve on. After 40 years, I just played my best Mozart G minor Symphony [under David Greilsammer].” He feels he is learning everyday, and continues to add to his extensive record and CD library.

Tom has many wonderful stories about his acquaintance with Leonard Bernstein. Over lunch one time Bernstein told him how he felt he was always learning from orchestras, and mentioned in particular the Vienna Philharmonic. And he explained that his best performances are “when I feel like I’m composing when conducting”.

Tom noted that a musician’s social life can narrow down due to our unusual schedule; we are busy when many people are socializing and relaxing. He finds it important to use the summers to make up for that. He also enjoys taking in plays at the Stratford and Shaw festivals during our off-season.

What has buoyed him up and helped him keep going for this length of time? Tom credits his colleagues and their sense of humour; he likes to read, go to movies, and since he doesn’t own a car, he does lots of walking. His advice to young musicians is to “look after yourself, so you too can enjoy a long and musically satisfying career.”



Drawing of Bette Davis by Tom Kay, Sr.

His plans for retirement, when it happens, will be to showcase his father’s drawings with an exhibition or publication. His father played guitar at ABC Radio and TV from 1947–1973. When bored during interviews on the Dick Cavett show he would sketch the guests then have them autograph the drawings after the taping. Tom also wants write a book about his experiences turning

pages for famous musicians. He has the title already: *The Page Turner*.

* * *

Faith Levene, oboe and English horn, has a knack for getting right to the point. Reed makers among the *Una Voce* readership will surely comprehend her perspective on forty years of symphonic music-making. In real life, Faith is eclectic and creative and always one to bring people together to celebrate.



Faith Levene, oboe and English horn, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Photo courtesy of Sherpa Marketing

Here’s her feedback when asked about her long tenure with the kws:

“I would be glad to discuss all these questions with you but I must go make reeds now. We could meet tomorrow but I’ll probably be making reeds. Big changes in the orchestra? I wouldn’t know. I’m usually making reeds. Memorable moments? When I made a good reed. Things I’m still learning? How to make a good reed. Performance anxiety? When I don’t have a good reed. To balance the stress and intensity of the job, I watch tennis while I make reeds.”

Memories of China

by David Thies-Thompson
National Arts Centre Orchestra

On October 4 the National Arts Centre Orchestra embarked on a monumental tour of China. This 18-day tour included the major cities: Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai but also took us to Guangzhou, Chongqing, Fuling, and Tianjin.

The vast scale and enormity of these cities was quite overwhelming! The traffic was simply unlike anything most of us had experienced, both in volume and driving style. All we could discern is that the first to the inter-

section has right of way (and that the horn is both brake and turn signal!). We thankfully didn't witness any accidents and cars appear in excellent condition, so the locals seem to be just fine with the rules of the road. There were bicycles, but far fewer than I had anticipated; cars really are a predominant feature, unfortunately. We did learn that in Beijing there are limited numbers of new cars allowed for purchase, and that, interestingly,



Wolf Tormann and safety crew member backstage in Shanghai

depending upon the last digit of the license plate, the car must not be driven one assigned day of the week. Our guide to the Great Wall noted that he takes his "BMW" to work in Beijing (Bus/Metro/Walk.)

We played a joint concert with the Hong Kong Sinfonietta. Even with only one rehearsal, it was a successful performance of Tchaikovsky's Fifth

Symphony. NACO accompanied cellist Amanda Forsyth for Alexina Louie's "Bringing the Tiger Down From The Mountain II," a fitting piece given the setting. John Estacio joined the orchestra on tour. His composition "Brio: Toccata and Fantasy for Orchestra" was warmly received at every performance of the work.



David Thies-Thompson teaching in Beijing Central Conservatory of Music. Photo courtesy of NACO

Fuling, a "tiny" rural outpost, with a population of six to seven million, was a two-hour run-out from Chongqing. We performed in the newly constructed concert hall (the stench of fresh paint was still present). Much of the city had been relocated up a steep hillside due to the flooding of the Three Gorges Dam project. It was evident that we were the first western orchestra to perform here. The audience was completely unfamiliar

with Western concert etiquette, with audience members texting, talking, and walking around. During the tutti of the Mozart Concerto, Maestro Zukerman had to shush them before his solo entry. Even before the concert, when we were ready to tune, the huge video monitors on either side of the stage came alive with ads for an upcoming hip hop show and for Audis – it was hilarious! The Tianjin and Beijing concert halls, on the other hand, were beautiful, ultra modern, and state of the art, with exquisite acoustics and backstage amenities.



Tianjin Grand Theatre. Photos courtesy of Colin Traquair, NACO

Not everyone loved the local food and sightseeing, but many of us ventured out, particularly for a memorable trip to the Great Wall with several donors who joined us for the last three cities of the tour – Tianjin, Beijing, and Shanghai. Governor General David Johnston, John Baird, and Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson joined the orchestra for the last concert.

Educational outreach played a large role on the tour with events throughout, notably at Xinhai Conservatory in Guangzhou, Beijing Central Conservatory, and in Shanghai. There is abundant talent!

NAC CEO Peter Herndorff, Board Chair Julia Foster, and much of our management accompanied us on the tour. It was invaluable having this demonstration of support. Embedded journalists were also on the trip allowing for unparalleled press coverage.

It was a once in a lifetime experience!

Brass concert in Fragrant Hills Park, Beijing

by Jill Kirwan

National Arts Centre Orchestra

The Rideau Lakes Brass Quintet was asked to perform a Pop Up Concert outside of Beijing at Fragrant Hills Park. After a long bus ride through the city to the outskirts on a cold afternoon, my colleagues – Karen Donnelly, Steven Van Gulik, and Don Renshaw – and I set up our music stands in front of a beautiful ancient structure.

People gathered all around us taking photos, video taping, and generally enjoying our concert. The venue was absolutely gorgeous and I will always remember a little boy having such a good time conducting as we played.



The Rideau Lakes Brass Quintet in Fragrant Hills Park, Beijing. Photo courtesy of Jill Kirwan

Santa Claus(es) Came Early for CPO Musicians

by Rob McCosh
Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

In the last round of negotiations, the union team identified some areas of the agreement that they felt could be improved to benefit not only the musicians affected, but the Calgary Philharmonic Society as well. Two such areas were transition to retirement and job-sharing.

In the past some musicians had left the orchestra because either their health was not able to withstand the rigours of a full season or they wanted to balance family and life commitments with a reduced work commitment with the CPO. Consequently, the union team researched language currently in place, namely from the Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto agreements, and they formed a solid frame of reference in which to customize something that would be mutually agreeable to the musicians and management of the CPO.

It was heartening to learn that the Society felt the same way, though there were some stumbling blocks. In terms of the transition to retirement it was determined that only one musician would be eligible in any given

season and the musician had to have provided 20 years of continuous service. To ensure quality and consistency it was agreed that the musician would play at least 15 weeks but not more than 25 weeks per year during either the last year or the last two years prior to full retirement. This figure also was meant to attract a quality replacement as it represented a significant amount of work for that replacement. The Society has to consult with the applicable audition committee, the Music Director, the respective Section Principal, and the Personnel Manager. There are timelines set out that align with issuing personal service contracts and the acceptance of the contract. Initially the Society balked at providing all the benefits that a full-time player received but in the end agreed that the cost was worth having the ability to keep on a seasoned veteran on a reduced basis. Other gains in this area were an increase to the retirement payout and an “age plus years served” formula from the previous mandatory age of 65 to qualify.

The job-sharing clause took a significant amount of work. It required setting up the parameters of a job-sharing committee, which is comprised of the Music Director, Principal of the section (or a related section principal when it is the Principal who is job-sharing), the Director of Artistic Operations and the CEO, as well as consultation with the section involved. For the CPO only one shared string position and one shared non-string position can be granted in a season. The timelines again align with the issuing and returning of contracts. It was felt that a tenured musician who was under review would not be eligible. The filling of the other position would be done in accordance with audition procedures already outlined in the agreement. A division of work had to be mutually agreed upon by the two musicians though all services related to a production had to be performed by the same musician. If a non-core musician is hired to be one of the musicians no relief is provided but it is still provided for the tenured musician. Initially the Society didn’t want to provide a full-year’s seniority credit to the tenured musician(s) but relented in the end. It was also discovered that the CPO healthcare provider only operates on a vested full-time position so language was put in that “the Society may provide a negotiated stipend for a non-core job-sharing musician on a case-by-case basis with a healthcare provider.”

Both sides recognized that the job-sharing clause would likely need further refinement as it would be impossible to try and capture all the permutations and combinations of how these two positions would work, especially in its first iteration. However, it is encouraging to note that both clauses are already being used in their first year of existence. It will be interesting to see how it evolves over the life of the agreement. Kudos to

the Society for finding common ground with the union in a desire to accommodate and retain quality musicians on a reduced workload basis.

* * *

Thanks to the union team of Jim Scott, Jocelyn Colqhoun, Doug Kuss, and Allistair Elliott for help with this article.

The OSM Helps to Pick Up the Pieces in Lac-Mégantic

by Alison Mah-Poy

Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal

On November 1 the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal traveled to Lac-Mégantic to play a concert for the people of the town that had been forever changed on July 6, 2013.



We boarded the buses with feelings of anticipation and uncertainty. The three-hour bus ride was through rain and stormy weather but as we approached Lac-Mégantic, the skies cleared up and we could see the shimmering water of the lake. As we drove into the quaint town, we turned left at the church. All of a sudden

there was silence and all we could see was an immense dirt pit. This was the town centre. Unimaginable.

We continued on to the Complexe Sportif Lac-Mégantic where people greeted us with smiling faces. We unloaded our instruments and got our things settled in the locker-rooms. As for the “stage”, only plywood sheets separated it from the ice itself, so a definite chill hung in the air.

In the main hallway of the sports centre a memorial board listed all forty-seven people who lost their lives on that fateful day in July. It was hard not to feel moved by the heartbreaking tributes and pictures. Facing the sports complex was the old main street of the town. The cafés, stores, historic town centre, including library and archives, were now replaced with wire fences, mounds of dirt, and heavy construction vehicles. A distinct odour of fuel constantly reminded us of the disaster, even when the devastation was out of view.

As we walked to the church, we crossed paths with townspeople making their way to the concert – everyone very friendly, greeting us with a smile. It just seemed unimaginable that this was their new normal, walking by the old downtown that had just disappeared. At the



Complexe Sportif Lac-Mégantic

church, a gathering point after the disaster, was a makeshift memorial. Messages of remembrance and hope were attached to the fences, which also had signs warning “interdit.” What was striking was a hand drawn map of the area pinned up on the fence to explain what had happened because with nothing left, there wasn’t



any context. Imagine, a runaway train with 72 cars of fuel, speeding uncontrollably into the centre of town.

The concert had standing room only in the arena, and many had never seen a symphony orchestra live. We were welcomed by the mayor, Madame

Colette Roy-Laroche. Before she spoke, the audience, almost 2000 people from her town, gave her the warmest standing ovation, moving many to tears. We performed Mozart’s Magic Flute overture, some movements of Vivaldi’s Four Seasons and finished with Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition. The ovation was long and appreciative. The emotion was still palpable, many with tears in their eyes thankful to the orchestra for coming. They were so grateful, waving goodbye as we left the stage, shouting out, “Merci beaucoup!” It was hard not to be moved by these resilient people who are slowly picking up the pieces. As much as the town of Lac-Mégantic needed a hug, I came away with the feeling that they gave me a big hug. I will never forget this day, the town, the concert and most importantly, the people.

* * *

For information about donations, see <http://www.redcross.ca/donate/donate-online/donate-to-lac-megantic-support-fund>

Photos by Alison Mah-Poy.

MROC – Have you signed up?

Margaret McGuffin

CEO, Musicians' Rights Organization of Canada

In August, the delegates to the 2013 Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) conference passed a resolution urging the professional members of their respective orchestras to register with the Musicians' Rights Organization of Canada (MROC) at the earliest opportunity. A number of the OCSM Players' Committees have already worked with their musicians to complete this process but MROC still needs to hear from the rest of you.

You may already be aware that MROC is a not-for-profit organization that distributes neighbouring rights and private copying royalties to musicians. You may not be aware, however, that MROC is the only collective in Canada for musicians that is governed by musicians. In fact, OCSM holds a permanent seat on the MROC Board of Directors.

MROC provides an additional revenue stream of royalties to the royalties that SOCAN pays to songwriters and music publishers. If you are a songwriter and a musician, **you need to register with both SOCAN and MROC.**

The royalties that MROC pays to musicians are royalties which are related to the broadcast and public performance of their sound recordings. This includes royalties from commercial radio, CBC radio, XM/Sirius and businesses such as fitness clubs and retail stores. MROC also distributes private copying royalties collected from the importers of blank media CD-Rs.

You should also be aware that MROC works for you beyond Canada. MROC has agreements with collective management organizations from around the world – including those in the UK and the United States.

MROC wants to make this process as easy as possible. The first step is to register with MROC so that they know which orchestra you are currently working with. MROC will then contact you to collect any additional information they may need to allow you to claim all the royalties that are owed to you.

Royalties are an increasingly important source of revenue for musicians in this digital world and it is important that we defend their value and make sure everyone knows about these potential royalty payments.

- How do I sign up?

Visit (www.musiciansrights.ca)

- How do I find out more?

Email: info@musiciansrights.ca

Phone: 416-510-0279; (Toll Free) 1-855-510-0279

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