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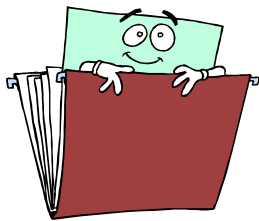
The Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) is the voice of Canadian professional orchestral musicians. OCSM's mission is to uphold and improve the working conditions of professional Canadian orchestral musicians, to promote communication among its members, and to advocate on behalf of the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

Editorial

by Barbara Hankins

OCSM Publications Editor

The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see. — Winston Churchill



The filing cabinet was stuffed to the brim, with papers dribbling out of its gaping drawers. Someone needed to clean up the Players' Association files, and I offered. A colleague and I sat down with a big blue box handy and started sorting

through 44 years of material. I found it fascinating, my colleague found it disconcerting.

"It's depressing to read about all the troubles again."

So I soldiered on alone, and am close to finishing. What's the point?

As I see it, where we are reflects where we have been. We need to understand our history and know how we got here. Yes, I know that our history is not our future, and excavating the past can be painful. However, I agree with Bob in his article that knowledge of your history can help with present situations.

You can also find some interesting moments in history: Minutes of the KWS Board of Directors, May 16, 1972: "John Trembath moved that the orchestra make a mandate to proceed with negotiations for a contract with Local 226." That was the day our contract was born. Thank you John!

In this issue you can find articles on a wide variety of topics, including updates from Vancouver and Minnesota, tributes to Ray Petch, an article on stress, one on the Hammer Band project, and a list of new recordings by OCSM orchestras. Thank you to all our contributors.

Live in the moment but preserve your history

by Robert Fraser

OCSM President

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the meeting that led to the formation of OCSM. This was the first "Symphony Symposium" ("symposium," by the way, comes from the Greek *συμπόσιον* – *sumposion* – meaning "drinking party"), a two-hour conclave of delegates from eight orchestras, meeting during the Canadian Conference of the AFM in 1974. One year later, they had a full day, and by 1976 OCSM was born. Look for a brief overview of OCSM that I wrote for the March issue of the *International Musician*.

Anniversaries are always a good time for looking back and this brings me to the topic of history. This is something we have discussed at previous OCSM Conferences: how many orchestra musician associations or players' committees have written a history of their orchestra from the musicians' perspective? Does your orchestra committee keep archives of notes, minutes, and negotiating history? Is this information in a central location that can be accessed by musicians?

The reason this is so important is that many of our orchestras are looking at large turnover. In my own orchestra (Victoria), we had five new hires last season (in a core of 34 musicians that is almost 15%). By the time I had been with the orchestra barely 22 years, the personnel of both violin sections had completely changed. Each time a musician leaves, especially those who have served on committees, we lose not only musical ability, we also lose history; not just a piece of the bargaining unit's history, but a personal history as well. Perhaps that retiring musician had a personal difficulty that she overcame, and that knowledge would benefit someone new to the orchestra who may end up facing the same problem.

I'll put this out as a challenge to veteran musicians everywhere, especially those that have served on com-

mittees. Start writing things down now. A good place to start would be with numbers, especially for those of you who aren't good with words! Start a spreadsheet: each row a year of history and each column a major working condition (per service rate, weekly salary, number of weeks, season length, pension, orchestra's annual expenditures). Some of this information is available on the AFM website already: the SSD has put wage chart information on line going back several years. Mark each year you settled a collective agreement and make a brief side note of the major work rules that changed each time. I have done one for the Victoria Symphony that goes back to the oldest copies of the contract that I could find in the Local Union office, from 1977.

Once you are finished this, then it's considerably easier to fill in other details: who the key personnel were in both union and management, whether there were grievances filed and what they were about – anything that had a significant impact (e.g. change of music director, new hall) should be noted. As your history takes shape, two things become strikingly apparent: how much things have improved and how many things need improvement!

So – challenge issued. I hope I can learn some interesting things about your history from OCSM Delegates at this summer's Conference.

"Everyone who wants to know what will happen ought to examine what has happened: everything in this world in any epoch has their replicas in antiquity." — Niccolò Machiavelli

The Rocky Road to Ratification

by Olivia Blander

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

In the fall of 2013, the musicians of the vso approved a new four-year agreement with the Vancouver Symphony Society, which took effect in June 2012.

Gains include an 11.4 per cent increase in minimum annual salary, an increase in seniority pay, and partial coverage of health insurance premiums. By the final year of this agreement, we will have added a 41st week to the season, as well as two additional permanent musicians, bringing us to 71.

As always, bargaining was a challenge with a major frustration being the delay we suffered because of some issues with our local that required resolution before we could begin to bargain with management.

Thinking we were well organized with plenty of time, we had elected our committee, created our musicians' questionnaire and polled our members well before

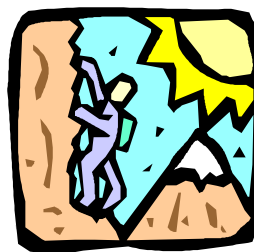
the end of our previous contract. What we then had to deal with was a disagreement between our own musicians and the Vancouver local of the CFM, the vma.

There had been a longstanding discussion on who would be eligible to vote when ratifying our new contract, after many years of it appearing to us to be a clear-cut process that includes all full-time, permanent musicians. Considering the great importance of the issues we bring to the bargaining table, the struggle we face each time, and the ever real possibility of a close vote, the musicians of the vso were extremely concerned about the inclusion of voters who have a very different stake in the results, e.g., in a "no" vote, or anything leading to possible job action.

The vma submitted their application to the BC Labour Board with a list of over one hundred extra musicians: anyone who had played with the symphony during the agreement.

In order to prepare for Labour Board hearings, we had no choice but to employ legal counsel and we have incurred hefty expenses in dealing with our own local and their legal counsel.

The final agreement that was arrived at between vso musicians and the union local specified a number of eligible voters, based on performing at least one-third of the scheduled services during the previous contract. Eleven specific musicians were determined to be eligible. The right to vote is not transferable if, for example, a musician is out of town. (Proxy votes had not previously been allowed for permanent musicians.)



Another key item in the agreement with the vma was the addition of a member to the vso negotiating committee, to be elected by the extras. The committee was very fortunate in this instance to have Laurel Spencer, a French horn player, join us as the extras' representative.

What could have been a touchy situation became a very positive one, as Laurel was a strong and fair-minded advocate for her constituents. Her thoughtfulness and contributions were greatly appreciated.

The hourly rate for extras will increase steadily over the four years (at a higher rate than contract musicians) so that in the final year the gap between the two hourly rates is substantially decreased, from almost \$9 in 2012, down to \$3.86 at the end of the agreement period. Reaching parity was the goal of the committee. It was in fact part of our package until very near the end of bargaining.

Of course our bargaining and scheduling was further complicated by the vma having a disagreement

with the AFM/CFM, eventually leading to the local being put under trusteeship. We were extremely lucky to have Francine Schutzman chosen as the trustee, making her the union representative at our bargaining table. We could not have asked for someone with more experience and expertise, not to mention that she clearly had the respect of our management at a time when we might have been worried about any question to our solidarity.

After the late start and months of bargaining, it became difficult to achieve retroactive pay, even when we had a surplus in the year.

On the non-monetary side of things, our new auditions clause aims to more fully define the process and help to avoid future disagreements. The committee felt that the management side was very open to discussing this issue when they saw how much work had gone into preparing the new language on our side.

For further details of any issues that are of interest to you, feel free to drop me a line: (olivia.blander@gmail.com)

The negotiating committee: Rebecca Whitling (chair), Ashley Plaut, Nadia Kyne, Dylan Palmer, Olivia Blander, Laurel Spencer; with help from negotiator Tony Penikett, and VMA trustee Francine Schutzman.

Ray Petch – R.I.P.

by Dave Jandrisch

Chair, MROC

On February 1, 2014, we lost a fine musician and a great advocate for Canadian musicians with the passing of Ray (Ernest Raymond) Petch after a brief illness.

Ray was born in Regina in 1933, and grew up in Brandon and Victoria before settling in Calgary where, as a young man, he began his musical career as the pianist with the Strathcona Military Band. Following his stint as a Canadian Forces musician, he remained in Calgary and spent many years as a professional jazz pianist, and while doing so began his musical administration career serving as the President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Calgary Musicians' Association, where he honed his excellent negotiating skills.



Ray often talked about his enjoyable relationship with Robert Shaw, then the manager of the Calgary Philharmonic with whom, over the years, he had negotiated some very desirable improvements for the musicians of the orchestra. Also high on his list of achievements was the 1988 Calgary Olympics which he negotiated at the request of then Vice President from Canada J. Alan Wood – an agreement which established groundbreak-

ing conditions and payments that made the musicians who performed the event the highest paid of any previous AFM/Olympic agreement for musical services in North America.

In 1991 Ray succeeded J. Alan Wood, thereby becoming the second AFM Vice-President from Canada in AFM history, and moved to Toronto. During his six years in office he compiled an enviable list of achievements including the passing of the Status of the Artist Act Canada in 1992, the Copyright Revision Act Bill C-32 which established Neighbouring Rights Legislation in Canada, as well as many excellent collective agreements with the CBC, Canadian Advertisers Association, NFB, and others. He also successfully withstood a number of challenges, the most notable being an attempt at disaffiliation from the AFM in 1996 by Local 406, Montreal.

In 1997 he retired from his VP position, but not from the music scene. He moved back to Calgary with his wife Dorothy (affectionately called Dottie by all who knew her) and resumed his now part-time career as a working musician – composing, playing piano with small groups as well as with two local big bands for whom he also wrote many arrangements. Two months ago in December of 2013, Ray told the Fox Big Band that he would be retiring at the end of the year. A farewell concert date was set for January to celebrate Ray's achievements with the band. He was able to see and hear it from his hospital bed via Skype.

In November of 2010, Ray was appointed a Director of the Musicians' Rights Organization of Canada (MROC) and soon thereafter was elevated by his fellow Directors to the position of Vice President. He was a valuable addition to the Board and was a member of the MROC team that negotiated an agreement for an excellent working relationship with the AFM. Ray announced at MROC's December meeting of the Directors that he would be retiring at the end of his term and not be running for office at the MROC 2014 AGM. He was promptly asked and agreed to act as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Shortly after he was hospitalized on New Year's Day, I spoke with him by phone and he advised me that if he became unable to properly fulfill his role as chair of the committee, he would submit a letter of resignation. When I visited him in the hospital in Calgary in late January, he once again displayed his stoic sense of humour and said "I guess I won't have to send in my resignation – that's already covered in the By-laws!" (referring to that section that includes a series of reasons for declaring a Director's office becoming vacant, among which is death). He then flashed a big grin, which he always did in the past when he said something funny.

Eddy Bayens described Ray most eloquently in an

email he sent to me after our visit to the hospital: “He is indeed a remarkable individual who quite philosophically, and without complaint, is dealing with his considerable burden and still has room for a sense of humour, most of which is at his own expense. The various recipients of his diverse talents are indeed fortunate that he cared about them. I’m thankful for the opportunity to have been able to spend some time with him.”

I can only add “Amen” to those words.

* * *

For further information and guest book responses go to www.legacy.com/obituaries/calgaryherald.

Dinner with Ray Petch

by Rob McCosh

Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

At the last Musicians’ Rights Organization of Canada board meeting in Toronto in November, we went out as a group for dinner. To my delight and surprise, Ray waved me over and asked me to sit next to him. I don’t know why I deserved the honour but I was happy to accept the invitation. We then proceeded to go back and forth over the 25 years we’ve known each other, sharing a lot of laughs and good conversation about the issues we’d faced together.

The first time Ray and I worked together was when I was on the negotiating team for Symphony Nova Scotia. It was the musicians’ wish at the time to have Symphonic Service Division (SSD) come in and lead the negotiations, which previously had always been handled by the local President. This did not sit well with the local executive board and they rejected our request. The musicians appealed that decision to the AFM Vice President, who was Ray, citing the AFM bylaws protecting our right to choose our own negotiator. Ray overturned the local’s decision and directed them to allow us to bring in SSD. This of course led to further repercussions down the road but that is a rather long story.

What I always took away from that was that Ray acted as a leader upholding the greater good, and not as a politician. As you’re probably aware, the titled officers of the AFM are elected by the locals at the AFM Convention. Going against a local or locals can be political suicide. That didn’t matter to Ray. What mattered was what was fair and the right thing to do.

Over the intervening years since that first encounter, I ran into Ray at conferences, conventions and local board meetings. He was always genuinely interested in how things were going in the orchestra, or at the local, or with OCSM. In my various roles during that time if I did or said something that Ray didn’t agree with, he

readily let me know. I appreciated what I like to think of as his Western candour and, at times, rather colourful language. You always knew where you stood with him. Ray didn’t suffer fools or foolish actions.

So thanks, Ray, for caring, thanks for being a leader, friend, and mentor. You loved this union, despite its occasional missteps, probably more than anyone I know. You fought the good fight time and again for wages, working conditions, and democratic rights for musicians across this continent. You’ve more than earned your rest. Be at peace.

New recordings by OCSM orchestras

by Matt Heller

OCSM Past President

The past year brought noteworthy recordings by several Canadian orchestras. Whether documenting a memorable tour, evoking a master, celebrating a centenary, or presenting original new work, they reflect a diverse range of outstanding performances by Canadian symphonic musicians.

Edmonton Symphony: A Concert For New York

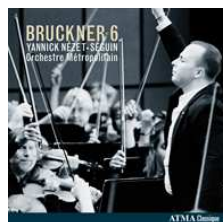


The ESO performs works by Rival, Estacio, Gilliland, Martinu, and Bernstein, all featured in the orchestra’s Carnegie Hall debut in May 2012, led by music director William Eddins. This double-CD set also features guest soloists

Angela Cheng, Juliette Kang, Denise Djokic, and Jens Lindemann.

Source: www.edmontonsymphony.com/a-concert-for-new-york-recordings-about/

Orchestre Metropolitain: Bruckner 6



The fifth in a series of Bruckner symphonies under Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the ATMA-Classique label. Toronto Star music critic John Terauds called this “one of the best of the lot, impeccably paced and played with utter conviction.” Source:

www.atmaclassique.com/En/Albums/AlbumInfo.aspx?AlbumID=1479

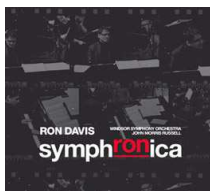
Toronto Symphony: Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky



Timed for the 100th anniversary of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, this live recording also includes Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*. The TSO is conducted by music director Peter Oundjian. Source:

www.tso.ca/Plan-Your-Experience/TSO-Live.aspx

Windsor Symphony: Symphronica



Featuring jazz pianist / composer Ron Davis performing his own original compositions and arrangements, this was the Windsor Symphony's final recording under music director John Morris Russell.

Source: www.rondavismusic.com/symphronica

Live Music is Best

by Francine Schutzman

A Letter to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Artistic Director Andre Lewis

I am a retired member of the National Arts Centre Orchestra who is currently working in Vancouver. I have had the pleasure of sitting in the orchestra pit for countless RWB performances in Ottawa, so I was looking forward to attending a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in Vancouver on the first weekend in February.

The Prokofiev work contains some of the most sublime music ever written, in my opinion. However, I saw no mention of an orchestra, so I phoned the RWB office and found out that the dancers would be performing to a recording. The person I spoke with wasn't able to find out if the recording was even of a Canadian orchestra. In any case, I decided that I would not be paying nearly \$100 to attend any of the Vancouver shows.

If there is no live orchestra, this should be made apparent in your advertising so that the audience members are aware that they will be seeing only half a performance. Seeing the dancers perform to a recording is the same, to me, as hearing a live orchestra play but with robots dancing on the stage. The two art forms are meant to go together.

I wonder if you have contacted any of the orchestras or classical-music contractors in Vancouver. The city is full of highly skilled musicians who would not need a great deal of rehearsal time to perform even such a challenging work as the Prokofiev. Have you ever had discus-

sions about collaborating with the Vancouver Symphony or the Vancouver Opera? There is also a large bank of freelance musicians from which to draw.

I am very well aware of the fiscal challenges faced by all arts organizations. I realize that it is costly to hire an orchestra and am happy if this means that, at least sometimes, our artists are able to earn a living wage. I look forward to the day when neither the arts organizations nor the artists have to struggle to make that so.

I would have been happy to pay that \$100 to support a complete endeavor, but, sadly, you did not offer me one. I hope that my next evening out to see the ballet will include a chance to hear the live music that forms part of that performance.

Francine Schutzman

Trustee, Vancouver Musicians' Association

President, Musicians' Association of Ottawa-Gatineau
OCSM Past President

Crucial Conversations

by Barbara Hankins

OCSM Publications Editor

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High, by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzer 2012

"Now listen to me, you won't get anywhere in this business if you get mixed up in politics and think you're going to save the world."

"Bbbut . . . I was just pointing out what's in the contract."

"Well, you better keep your nose clean or you won't get tenure."

So, what's your reaction – flight or fight? Silence or violence?



How often do we find ourselves caught in a situation in which the brain goes into survival mode because we feel we're being attacked? How often do we feel dissatisfied by our adrenaline-fuelled reaction? If we were mother bears

with cubs, a reaction of violence is useful, or if we were a mouse being hunted down by a cat, being silent is perhaps the wise choice. However in our workplace, families, and communities we can all use help with knowing how to communicate without damaging relationships.

We all argue about important issues, however it's how you argue that really matters. Unfortunately, the more crucial the conversation, the more likely we'll not

handle it well. *Crucial Conversations* gives specific tools that can be used in a wide variety of situations, and when practiced they can give us confidence to express our opinions, and not react violently or silently to those of others.

After over twenty-five years of research involving about 100,000 people, the authors have found successful communication methods for having conversations in which the stakes are high, the opinions vary, and the emotions run strong. Some of the important ideas presented include: deciding what you really want for yourself, for others, for the relationship; making the situation safe for differences of opinion; beginning with facts rather than interpretations; looking for a mutual purpose; speaking persuasively and not abrasively; and tips on listening when others blow up or clam up.

Instead of avoiding tough conversations, we are given the challenge to face them effectively. There is proof that learning how to communicate well can even make you a healthier person.

I would recommend this book for anyone who has conversations! It would be particularly useful for colleagues who are chairing committees and general meetings, who negotiate with management, and who deal with personnel issues on a regular basis.

Also by the same authors: *Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior*, 2013.

More information about these books can be found at: (www.vitalsmarts.com/crucialconversations)

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. — Martin Luther King Jr.

The Hammer Band: From Violence to Violins

by Dilys Leman

Classical violinist Moshe Hammer is not a man of science. He is, nonetheless, excited about scientific research that affirms what he has long intuited: that musical training has enormous cognitive benefits—improved memory, attention, communication. “But there’s a lot more to it,” he says. “And it’s keeping the scientists busy looking.” Indeed, research projects worldwide are studying the benefits of school and community-based music programs on children’s development. Preliminary findings of one such initiative—the Harmony Project, led by Dr. Nina Kraus, a professor and neuroscientist at Northwestern University—suggest that these music programs can actually alter the structure and function of children’s brains, to create “better learners,” and can

even narrow the academic performance gap between rich and poor students.¹

Hammer believes that creating better learners “is a good thing,” but he’s especially concerned about creating “better people.” In 2006, in the wake of Toronto’s Summer of the Gun, he was near despair. “I asked myself, ‘What can I possibly do to stop the violence, to protect children?’” *Violence. Violins*. He mulled the two words over, and soon an idea was born. That same year, he founded The Hammer Band: From Violence to Violins (<http://www.thehammerband.com>).

The non-profit organization provides free school-based violin instruction to children in Toronto’s underserved neighborhoods. The program is not about finding “the next Heifetz” or forming “an orchestra of wunderkinds,” says Hammer. It’s about helping children at risk of gang involvement to develop critical life skills—listening, concentration, problem solving, cooperation, communication—skills that will help them become resilient, confident, empathetic adults. “You can’t simply hand these kids a dose of confidence on a shiny platter. They need to learn confidence, even *earn* it, through the challenging work of learning to play the violin.”

Many of the Hammer Band Kids, as they are called, were born outside of Canada and live in “priority” neighborhoods such as the Jane and Finch community, where there are high concentrations of criminal gangs. Hammer says the violin lessons are helping students to integrate into their schools and to build a sense of community and belonging. To date, 23 schools are enrolled, with a total of 500 students participating. Offered as early as grade three, the program follows children as they progress from the primary school years into secondary education. Each child is loaned an instrument and participates in free group lessons, thanks to the generosity of corporate, foundation and individual donors. The lessons, held weekly during school hours, are taught by Hammer and his team of highly professional musicians. Throughout the year, students perform in concerts at their schools and in private homes, and at special events—they opened last year’s *ideacity* conference at Koerner Hall.

As neuroimaging so dramatically depicts, playing a musical instrument engages vast regions of the brain, literally lighting up areas considered important for language, memory, emotion, motor control and executive function.² Twelve-year-old Awab, who emigrated from

1 See Lori Miller Kase, “Using Music to Close the Academic Gap: New studies on the cognitive advantages of learning instruments at early ages,” *The Atlantic*, October 9, 2013, available online at (<http://www.theatlantic.com>).

2 As noted by Dr. Anirudd Patel, an associate professor of psychology at Tufts University, in “Using Music to Close the Academic Gap.”

Lebanon in 2004 and is in grade six at Toronto's Brookview Middle School (located in the heart of Jane and Finch), joined the Hammer Band last school year. Already he has noticed changes in how he thinks and feels. "At first I found the violin really hard—I felt like quitting, I sounded so awful. But I kept practising, and I could tell I was improving. Even school got easier. Now I feel proud, like I'm really accomplishing something. I have friends doing the same thing, the violin. Everyone's helping each other get better."

* * *

Dilys Leman (MA, BEd) is a freelance writer and editor in Toronto. She serves on The Hammer Band Advisory Committee and has two grown daughters who are accomplished violinists. Dilys's poetry book, *The Winter Count*, is forthcoming from McGill-Queen's University Press.

A Minnesota Update for OCSM

by Marcia Peck
Minnesota Orchestra

To our colleagues and friends across Canada, the Minnesota Orchestra musicians express our deepest gratitude. Your financial support and offers of employment enabled us to withstand unparalleled intransigence on the part of the Minnesota Orchestral Association (MOA). Your continuous messages of concern and understanding have made us feel less alone. But for your extraordinary support and many, many kindnesses, the lockout would have been truly unbearable. *Thank you.*

By now you are aware that we, still shell-shocked and wary, but strengthened in countless ways by our unity, returned to the stage of Orchestra Hall in early February. Fans and supporters were on hand in force to share the emotion and to soften the anxiety of returning to a building that had come to symbolize the priorities of an Association that had lost its way.

Our story began with a very private board with extreme top-down governance, poor investment decisions following the financial crisis of 2008, board leadership with little to no understanding or appreciation for the art, and a community that trusted that all was well.

Shielded from public view, a new business model was developed which would focus on using Orchestra Hall for "Pops and Presentations," rentals, corporate events, and a much-diminished "in-house" orchestra. The mission statement was changed; any reference to the orchestra itself was removed.

All sorts of monkey business followed, from misrep-

resentations to the state legislature when seeking funds for the renovation of Orchestra Hall (the MOA would manipulate endowment draws in order to "announce" balanced budgets for the purpose of obtaining state funds, but show extreme deficits in preparation for negotiating a contract with the musicians) to buying up myriad domain names that contained the words "Orchestra," "Symphony," and "Save." While laying off staff, CEO Michael Henson received \$200,000 in bonuses.

It is not a stretch to imagine that the first (and at the time, final) contract offer containing cuts of 30–50 per cent and more than 200 changes to work rules was intended to incite the musicians to strike during the closure of Orchestra Hall. We offered binding arbitration. The lockout was imposed with dizzying swiftness at midnight the day our contract expired.



Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra return to Orchestra Hall on February 7, 2014, after a 16-month lockout.

Since then we have lost many of our beloved colleagues as well as our Music Director, Osmo Vänskä. Nevertheless, we proceeded to produce our own series of concerts, which served a dual purpose. By paying our players for what averaged one week of work a month, we were able to bring the orchestra together both for the obvious morale boost and to keep alive not only the perception, but also the reality, that we were indeed still an orchestra. In addition our community was starved for great symphonic music. In all, we produced more than 30 concerts for approximately 30,000 music lovers. Friends from around the world agreed to perform with us, including Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Emanuel Ax, Eiji Oue, Joshua Bell, Jon Kimura Parker, Edo de Waart, Kevin Cole, and Itzhak Perlman. It's impossible to convey the depth of our gratitude to all these artists who stepped up to help us. They are true heroes.

In December, with the city of Minneapolis threatening to revoke the MOA's Orchestra Hall lease, a small group of board members began to meet quietly with our negotiating committee. It took a great deal of work to

build enough trust for the musicians to view the other side as legitimate partners in seeking resolution, but it led to what would become an actual negotiation. We worked out of public view throughout the holidays and into January. By January 11 we had a tentative agreement, which was ratified on January 14.

The agreement calls for cuts to scale of 15 per cent (from 2012 pre-lockout scale) in the first year, 13 per cent cut in Year 2, and 10 per cent cut in Year 3 (roughly speaking, increases of 2 per cent and 3 per cent.) Musicians will bear a greater share of the cost of health insurance. And of the 200+ proposed work rule changes, we agreed to about 12.

As of this writing, it is unclear if Osmo will be asked to return or if he will accept. We ardently hope for both. New board leadership is now in place and there are signs that assurances of a new era of “collaboration” may actually have some validity. And yet we hold no illusions about what we may face in three years. For now, we do know that the eyes of the community are watching. Prompted by community outrage, the MOA reinstated the word “orchestra” to its mission statement. The days of the Association acting unilaterally and in secret are over.

This ordeal has taught us that people do matter. Our institutions are guided by the personalities, values, and character of the people in charge. Our orchestra has suffered grievously as a result. We have a long road to recovery ahead. Nevertheless, we continue to believe in the institution. We will continue to work for an orchestra Minnesota can be proud of and for an art form that represents to us the highest aspirations of our lives. (www.minnesotaorchestramusicians.org)

Musicians, Stress, and Injury

by Lynn Kuo

National Ballet of Canada Orchestra

Musicians who have experienced a playing-related injury know the frustrations and physical struggle that come with not being able to play our instrument. At the onset of an injury, we suddenly become keenly aware of our present state, our symptoms: the injured area of our body, the sensations of pain, tingling, numbness, fatigue, the loss of stamina, coordination, control, range of motion, etc.

Many injury prevention resources (helpfully) point out the ever-important and significant issues of biomechanics, i.e., exceeding the physical limitations of our bodies (from playing too long or from repetitive muscular contractions), playing with excess muscle tension, instrument setup, body use and awareness, etc. Quite

often, it is a combinatorial result of numerous factors, some of which may even be intrinsic to the individual (e.g., joint hyperlaxity).

Acknowledging paradigmatic shifts towards a more holistic view on health and wellbeing, an integrative approach may also be helpful in understanding and treating playing-related injuries. As such, in addition to biomechanical factors, mental, emotional, and even social factors may be worthy of consideration in determining their potential influence on musicians’ playing-related injuries.

In occupational health, psychosocial factors, i.e., the interrelation of psychological and social factors, are studied for their effect on workers’ health. Likewise, in musicians’ health, psychosocial factors can combine with biomechanical factors to exert considerable influence on general health as well as playing-related injury risk. In this regard, psychosocial factors cannot be discounted when assessing a musician’s injury profile and it is often a combination of biomechanical and psychosocial factors from both musical and non-musical sources that can create a complex, multi-factorial, and highly-individualized portrait of injury occurrence in music (Ro, 2006).

Psychosocial stress and playing-related injury



Several studies conducted on musicians have indicated the influence psychosocial stress has on injury occurrence in musicians: Middlestadt and Fishbein’s (1989) large-scale study of 2212 orchestral musicians reported that those who experienced higher than average stress levels also reported the highest prevalence (71 per cent) of musculoskeletal injuries. Yoshie et al. (2008) demonstrated in amateur pianists that psychological stress affected muscle activity in the forearms. Dietrich et al. (2008) found a significant association between stress, depression, and muscle tension dysphonia (a voice disorder for which stress is a potential contributing factor).

Psychosocial risk factors in the music occupation

What exactly are the psychosocial risk factors in the music occupation? As performers, we are quite familiar with the stresses and strains that come with being a musician, some of which are universal and common to other occupations, e.g., job satisfaction, low decision latitude, co-worker relations, high physical demand, etc. Others are more music-specific, one of the most signifi-

cant ones being inextricably linked to what we do as performers, namely performance pressure/anxiety.

Performance pressure, when perceived negatively (and not positive and motivating) by the individual has the potential to negatively impact a person's overall well-being, and as demonstrated in the above-mentioned studies, can add to other psychosocial and biomechanical factors that can contribute to overall injury risk.

A 2013 joint study (Pilger et al., 2013) conducted on a Viennese radio orchestra found that those who demonstrated the highest physiological markers for stress were the first violins and conductors. Violinists (and violists) may find it no surprise that numerous studies have indicated that upper-string players have appeared to be particularly at risk for musculoskeletal disorders.

What does all this signify for those looking to understand, treat, and prevent playing-related injuries? That it may not be due to one single factor, and as recent studies and anecdotal evidence suggest, that it may not be solely a biomechanical issue. Psychosocial stress, which can include mental/emotional, social, and even spiritual issues, has the potential to impact a musician's overall health and well-being, and even overall risk for playing-related injury.

For a list of references or to read the full doctoral dissertation on the subject of holistic health and performance-related musculoskeletal disorders, please visit www.lynnkuo.com.

OCSM Annual Conference

The 39th Annual ocsM Conference will be held from August 5 to 8, 2014, at the Lord Nelson Hotel in Halifax, NS. All our members are welcome to attend the plenary sessions.

UNA VOCE

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