



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

"It was a pretty good year." That phrase was heard around the conference table as OCSM delegates from across the country shared the news of their orchestras. It was encouraging to hear that by far the majority of OCSM orchestras are thriving – both financially and artistically. Contrary to expectations, the harsh winters experienced in places like Winnipeg and Edmonton did not affect their ticket sales – in fact they both had increases! Read NAC delegate David Thies-Thompson's following report for conference details.

Since the conference there has been much activity around the situations with the Vancouver local and Local 406 in Quebec. These are complicated stories that we will address in the next *Una Voce* issue in January. Check for updates on the OCSM-OMOSC website.

Also in this issue we hear about a wonderful day on

the TSO tour, we can read about stress remedies for musicians, and we mourn the loss of OCSM friend Jim Biros.

OCSM began as an idea of Ruth Budd and Sam Levine in 1974. Forty years later their legacy continues to bring Canadian orchestras together for support, encouragement and action.

Dispelling and Debunking Myths: A Report of the 2014 OCSM Conference

by David Thies-Thompson,
National Arts Centre Orchestra

The Organization for Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM), the Players' Conference of twenty member orchestras of the Canadian Federation of Musicians, held its 40th annual conference this year in Halifax, Nova Scotia from August 5th to 8th. The delegates heard pre-



Sitting or kneeling: Shawn Spicer (OLC), Barbara Hankins (KWS), Marc Sazer (RMA), Merrie Klazek (TBSO), Stephanie Unverricht (SSO), Matt Heller (CPO), Francine Schutzman (Past President). Row one: Gary Burton (RSO), Mark Rogers (NBO), Liz Johnston (2nd Vice-President), Marie-Julie Chagnon (OSQ), Olivia Blander (VSO), David Thies-Thompson (NACO), Elspeth Thomson (HPO), Leslie Dawn Knowles (TSO), Arlene Dahl (WSO), Carla Lehmeier-Tatum (ROPA). Row two: Bev Spotton (COC), Gail Kruvand (RMA), Ellen Versteeg-Lytwyn (MPFCan), Humbert Martins (MPFCan), Faith Scholfield (Secretary), Greg Sheldon (Treasurer), Bob Fraser (President), Julian Jeun (WindSO), Mark Tetreault (SSD), Bernard LeBlanc (SSD), Paul Beauchesne (VicSO).

sentations from Orchestras Canada, the Recording Musicians Association (RMA), Theatre Musicians Association (TMA), Symphonic Services Division (SSD) in Canada and New York, the Musicians' Pension Fund of Canada, Vice President for Canada Alan Willaert, AFM Secretary-Treasurer Sam Folio, Regional Orchestra Players' Association (ROPA, representing the players of over 80 US orchestras), International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM, representing musicians of 51 major US orchestras), and keynote speaker and host of a round table on community engagement and education, Barbara Richman, Executive Director of Strategic Arts Management.

Most OCSM member orchestras are increasingly financially healthy, continuing to recover from the economic downturn and thriving in their communities. OCSM orchestras are touring nationally and internationally and achieving critical acclaim. New agreements feature modest wage increases and in a few cases added weeks to their seasons.

The OCSM delegates form subcommittees to draft resolutions and guidelines that can be adopted for orchestras. This year resolutions were made to bring all players of member orchestras onto the OCSM e-list with the option to then opt out if they prefer. There was also a resolution regarding the Hartford Opera: a successful campaign of musicians, AFM President Ray Hair, and citizens of Hartford to disallow recorded music to replace live musicians.

The OCSM Media Committee, with guests Alan Willaert, Bernard LeBlanc, and Francine Schutzman, drafted Internet Media Guidelines, which will certainly serve as a useful document for orchestras as they establish an internet presence. Fees are based on a percentage of scale (with a minimum payment) and define length of use as well as giving a mechanism for artistic oversight by the musicians. (Eighty-seven US orchestra managements have signed onto the negotiated US Internet Media Agreement.)

Alan Willaert spoke to the two larger issues facing the conference: the opinion poll on disaffiliation by Quebec Local 406 and the Vancouver Trusteeship; the latter a legal situation on which he would not comment for fear of perception of influence over the outcome. The ensuing discussions of the Local 406 situation resulted in two resolutions from the delegation: (1) to urge reconciliation by mediation if necessary between Local 406 and the AFM and (2) to urge the immediate translation into French of the newest (recently published) ByLaws of the AFM. The AFM/CFM is stronger with Quebec as a member.

After literally years of negotiations, the CBC and the AFM reached a deal, although only one year of it re-

mains at this point. It guarantees \$2 million in fees to AFM musicians, covers all platforms (audio-visual-internet), and includes an increase of employer pension contributions to 12 per cent. Supplemental market fees increased from 5 to 10 per cent. It is unfortunate that the CBC lost *Hockey Night in Canada* to Rogers, as it was a huge revenue stream.

One of the highlights of the conference was a particularly fascinating presentation by RMA President Marc Sazer and ICSOM Chairman Bruce Ridge about the power of Twitter and social networking feeds. E-mail is old, antiquated. Twitter is live stream, a way to change the world, reverse negativity and apathy, spread positive news, and create will for political action. "Save SDO," the Facebook and YouTube campaign to save the San Diego Opera, was instrumental to the decision by its board to reverse its decision to cease operations. Launched in April, the Listen Up Now! Campaign (<http://listenupnow.org>) is gaining traction as a public awareness information blitz to hold film and TV producers accountable to hire AFM musicians. Working from the ground up, mentored by community labour organizations, with Local members leafleting film set locations and using viral twitter campaigns, groundswell support, including from the mayor of Los Angeles, is growing. A successful leaflet campaign on the film set of the *Mad Men* set in motion the hiring of AFM musicians to record the music. In the US and Canada our tax dollars are funding TV and Film producers; we need to advocate, organize ourselves, and campaign by speaking to our elected officials to keep the work local. Lionsgate (revenues of \$2.7 billion), receiving millions in tax credits, pays for offshore musicians, while the Lionsgate CEO received a 95 per cent increase in salary in one year, to over \$65 million! Join the Twitter campaign and make a difference.

Good news prevailed from the American Player Conferences, ICSOM and ROPA. US Orchestras are rebounding after the economic downturn, in fact many with significant increases (8 to 9 per cent per year and lengthening seasons). Chicago received record gifts of \$32 million this year. Houston, Dallas, Cleveland (balanced budget), Buffalo, Lyric Opera (operating in the black 26 of the last 27 years), Florida Orchestra, Louisville, story after story, good news. The Strike Fund is again well funded.

Symphonic Services Division (SSD) works diligently on behalf of orchestral musicians, supporting locals with assistance for specific problems. The Industry is holding its own, with low levels of disputes. Of prime importance to SSD Canada is dispelling rumours that major orchestras are not hiring at National auditions, only going through the motions. There was some discussion with

regards to the new LMIA (Labour Market Impact Fee) and the need for Canadian rounds of auditions. There was a motion to write a history of auditions in Canadian orchestras, see where we've come from, what works, where we're headed. SSD encourages us to get involved with our Locals and to meet our public and supporters, as they are our biggest fans.

Mark Tetreault, SSD Canada, proposed that for the 2017 Sesquicentennial all the OCSM Orchestras play the National Anthem together, connected via internet.

Bernard LeBlanc, also of SSD Canada, has negotiated the contracts of two dozen orchestras, with a goal to form a template, and each time around gets closer to his goal. Although there are financial differences with each orchestra, these are good agreements that improve players' working conditions, and across the board show modest wage increases (3 to 5 year agreements with wage increases averaging 2 to 2.5 per cent per year).

What an amazing and passionate advocate we have in Katherine Carleton, Orchestras Canada Executive Director. She works tirelessly and expresses our message eloquently on our behalf. Advocating in the offices of local, provincial, and federal politicians, Canada Council, and other funding bodies, Orchestras Canada strives to serve as a focal point for the intersection of mutual interests, building and sharing of industry intelligence, and collective action. One of the achievements of OC's efforts is the Stretch Tax Credit, which offers an increased tax credit for repeated donations to the same organization.

Unfortunately, Canada Council has cut the allocations to recipients in the Orchestra Program by a range of .05 to 10.5 per cent. For an orchestra doing extremely well, a small cut was considered 6 to 8 per cent, with a smaller cut if the group was doing exceptionally well. Every participating orchestra had been warned of impending cuts. The funds which were not disbursed will now be redistributed as travel grants for national and international touring by individuals and orchestras. The OC Board is advocating to have Canada Council funding increased by \$35 million: "It's time to reinvest in Canada."

A recurring theme of the conference this year was that of dispelling and debunking myths, negativity and false perceptions, and telling our good-news stories. "A lie can spread around the world before the truth has time to get its pants on." Orchestras are healthy, vibrant organizations, adapting to changing times. Even the greying of audiences can be turned to a positive, as people are living longer, more healthy and active lives, and embracing the performing arts, both as consumers and participants. In many orchestras, new and younger audiences are attracted to innovative series, such as Casual Fridays at the NAC. I am always recharged and inspired

by these conferences. The message I can share with our members is to get involved, get to know your Local officers, your audiences, your fellow musicians. Get on Twitter and Facebook and spread the good news of our wonderful industry!

OCSM Conference 2014 Resolutions

Resolution No. 1

Whereas, Opera is a musical art form of high artistic integrity;

Whereas, Performances of opera greatly enrich the communities they serve;

Whereas, Replacing live musicians with a virtual orchestra, sampled instrumental sounds, or other electronic means greatly diminishes the overall enrichment to communities;

Whereas, Diminishing artistry and integrity by using something other than what is required by a composer, or the acceptable and traditional performance practice, does not comport with enrichment and high quality standards in any way;

Whereas, The Hartford Wagner Festival has announced its intent to use sampled instrumental sounds instead of a live orchestra for its production of Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold*;

Whereas, Such use would reduce the orchestra music to sampled orchestral sounds;

Whereas, The Hartford musicians and the Hartford community have organized to protest the egregious attempt by the Hartford Wagner Festival to degrade enrichment through music, the art of opera, and the performing arts;

Whereas, The Hartford Wagner Festival has responded by issuing unsubstantiated allegations, and other statements against the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (the "AFM"); and

Whereas, The AFM has responded by issuing a press release (also posted on the AFM website) to set the record straight; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Delegates of the 2014 OCSM Conference applaud the Hartford musicians and the members of the Hartford community for their courage and stalwart efforts to protect artistic integrity and enrichment through the arts to the Hartford community; and be it

Resolved, That the Delegates of the 2014 OCSM Conference applaud the AFM and AFM International President Ray Hair for their response to the unwarranted at-

tacks and untruthful and unsubstantiated allegations issued against the AFM and its members by the Hartford Wagner Festival's founder; and be it further

Resolved, That the Delegates of the 2014 OCSM Conference stand in solidarity with the Hartford musicians and the Hartford community in their efforts to preserve the integrity of music in all communities.

Resolution No. 2

Whereas, Jim Biros has attended every OCSM conference since 1999; and

Whereas, Jim, in his positions as senior business representative and later as Executive Director of Local 149, AFM, has been an invaluable contributor to the OCSM Conference and a tireless worker on behalf of our members in Toronto; and

Whereas, Jim is not able to attend the 2014 conference because of serious health concerns; be it

Resolved, That the 2014 OCSM Conference extend its best wishes to Jim for a full recovery in the hope we will see him for years to come.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 3:

Whereas, OCSM/OMOSC is a vibrant organization that depends upon the active participation of its members; and

Whereas, Many members have had difficulty in signing onto the OCSM e-list; and

Whereas, OCSM is aware of Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation and thus, a clear opt-out option will be provided; be it

Resolved, that all OCSM/OMOSC members be automatically added to the OCSM e-list unless they expressly state that they wish to be removed.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 4:

Whereas Canada is a bilingual nation; and

Whereas it has come to our attention that the latest version of the AFM bylaws have not been translated into French; be it

Resolved, that the Delegates to the 2014 OCSM Conference strongly urge the AFM to translate the 2013 AFM bylaws into French as soon as possible.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 5:

Whereas Canadian symphonic musicians, Anglophone and francophone, stand beside one another in solidarity; and

Whereas actions taken in the past season have tested that solidarity; and

Whereas a continued affiliation between Local 406

(GMMQ) and the American Federation of Musicians of United States and Canada (AFM/CFM) remains in the best interests of all; be it

Resolved, that the Delegates to the 2014 OCSM Conference urge reconciliation, by mediation if necessary, between Local 406 and the AFM.

Motion carried unanimously.

In Memoriam, Jim Biros (1948–2014)

by Bob Fraser

OCSM lost a great ally and a dear friend when Jim Biros, CEO of the Toronto Musicians' Association, Local 149, peacefully passed away on September 19. Tributes have poured in for Jim from all over the continent: from fellow union officers, musicians, contractors, employers, and artists in other profes-



Jim Biros

sions. In addition to his work for the TMA, Jim was both an actor and a playwright in his early career.

I take a great deal of comfort in knowing that so many took the time to offer Jim heartfelt thanks and appreciation while he was still with us. When he was in palliative care, his daughter Nicole invited his friends to send e-mails, which she then read to him. Here is what I sent:

* * *

Dear Nicole,

I met Jim in 1999 when we both attended our first OCSM (Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians) conference in Ottawa. We have both climbed the ladder since (I'm not sure whether we've both climbed up or down) – I am now OCSM's President and Jim the CEO of Local 149.

But we have never forgotten our roots as musicians, and our favourite gig together. I always tell everyone about my "gig with Jim Biros" where we played a bass trombone/accordion duo in a club on New Year's Eve. The club owner and staff were all very suspicious of this strange sounding (and strange looking!) duo, but we proved them wrong!! We had the joint hopping in no time; the drinks were flowing and everyone left the next morning quite happy, our dulcet tones still ringing in their ears. The club owner came up to us, with a paper

calendar/date book in hand (these were the days before smart phones) and he said: “Wow – I was skeptical, but you guys had the joint rocking!! I want to book you right now for next New Year’s Eve! Without missing a beat, Jim said: “Great! Can we leave our stuff here??”

We have both delighted in telling that story for many years. I’ll leave you to decide whether it actually happened.

It is such a pleasure working with Jim – I’ve seen him at every conference since 1999, save one – I believe it was something about his kid getting married?? – we reluctantly let him go for that as it seemed legit.

His expertise in his field and his gentle, forthright demeanour are an inspiration to all of us. I was thrilled to run into Jim in Toronto when I was there in June for the Orchestras Canada meetings; he was at a reception for retiring TSO musicians after one of their concerts, then I saw him at the National Ballet two days later. This was a side of him I had not seen before; the music lover, the art lover. I had seen the man who was a tireless advocate for musicians; it was therefore nice to see the man just enjoying the fruits of the labour of the people he represented so well.

I can appreciate that this is a difficult time for you all; I just want to let you know that there are people from one end of this continent to the other who are holding Jim in thoughts and prayers right now.

Yours Sincerely,
Bob Fraser
President, Organization of Canadian
Symphony Musicians
Bass Trombonist, Victoria Symphony

On Being “Eclectic in Amsterdam!”

by Leslie Dawn Knowles
Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Being on tour in the first violin section of the TSO, one might think I would be limited to the notes on a page, but I am also a jazz violinist and bluegrass fiddler and have no musical limits.

Today’s rare day off (August 26) for the TSO tour means exploring the city and its music. I hop in a taxi to meet up with a local friend and her gypsy jazz band with whom I’ll play tonight.

We hang out in my friend’s spacious loft full of her paintings and musical instruments, and spend the afternoon going over tunes, visiting, and watching the rain and sun vie for attention out the huge windows. Even though we have just met, we are catching up like old



friends and I know right away this will be good!

We make our way to Café Langereis, located on a corner by one of Amsterdam’s many picturesque bridges. This quaint old place is already crowded with people of all ages, and the vibe is very good. We settle in and begin to play, and find our audience to be very enthusiastic. We play a mix of mostly Django Reinhardt tunes with some jazz standards here and there, the slow ones hauntingly beautiful and the faster swing ones fiery and spirited.

In the band is David Niglo Grünholz, an amazing, versatile guitar player and a soulful musician who can play faster than the speed of light. My husband, TSO Principal Tuba Mark Tetreault, is also an adventurous soul and played bass for us.

As the evening goes on we get more and more fearless and the crowd eats it up. At one point, we decide to do a bluegrass version of “Sweet Georgia Brown” and it’s off to the races. This ignites the audience into a frenzy and as we finish the tune everyone is laughing with joy. The evening winds down and I head back to sleep and to ready myself for our TSO concert the next day. My head is buzzing with all kinds of happy emotions and it’s hard to settle, but a nice warm bath does the trick and I drift off to sleep.

The next day, I wander on over to the Concertgebouw to check things out. This is quite a different setting than last night! The building itself is stately and beautiful, and as I make my way into the hall, I feel as if I have entered a holy place. I can feel the energy which has been left by all of the great artists who have graced the magnificent stage, and it gives me goosebumps. The orchestra tunes, and as we start to play I am struck by the gorgeous legendary acoustic which makes this place so famous and well loved. My colleagues here are fantastic musicians and I am thrilled by how this hall shows just what a great orchestra we are. The sound just blooms – from the softest pianissimos to the loudest

fortes, it is always beautiful. I am so proud of my friends and happy to share this incredible experience with them, each and every one a very special artist.

And it is so easy to play! My violin is definitely happy and so am I. Just as last night, the crowd is warm and very appreciative, and as we take our bows I again find myself tearing up with happiness.

I have to pinch myself to realize this is not just some wonderful dream – within 24 hours I have been privileged to make music of all kinds with friends, and share it with so many people. I probably could not have a spoken conversation with many of them, yet the language of music has crossed that barrier and we are all closer as a result. It is a wonderful life and I am grateful beyond words.

Stress Busters for Musicians

by Tracy Poizner

Classical Homeopath

Performance Anxiety



I was asked to adapt an article about student stress for an audience of professional musicians. Having been an orchestral musician for 25 years, I know a bit about this topic.

There are some really helpful homeopathic remedies for straight up concert jitters. The indications for each of these is meant to help you recognize which might be best for you, but there is no shame in throwing two or four pellets of each in a water bottle and taking it right on stage or into the pit with you, fully disguised and ready to sip as needed.

GELSEMIUM is for those who get sick before the event, even days before. It could be a weak-in-the-knees feeling or a sense of heavy fatigue and sleepiness. If you get a performance headache, it's probably a tension headache, centred in the back of the head at the top of the neck. You feel like you are going out to do battle and may not survive it.

ARGENTUM NITRICUM is a true performer's remedy. You are an artist, you are normally confident and you love what you do, but you may get hit with nerves right before you go on stage, or suddenly during a solo, catching you off guard. You respond with panic, maybe even a deer-in-the-headlights feeling. You feel like your heart will burst right out of your chest and probably some part of you is trembling uncontrollably. Don't you just hate that?

LYCOPodium is for people who fall apart every time they have to do something outside their comfort zone. Maybe even public speaking does this to you. You are worried long before the event that you are not up to it, although nobody would guess because your colleagues think you are a model of self-confidence. Your physical weakness is likely on the right side of the body rather than the left. If by chance you tend to suffer from a lot of digestive issues such as gas or bloating, chalk up an extra point for this remedy.

You can find these in the homeopathy section of any health food store or pharmacy that carries natural remedies. They come in a little tube, probably with the number 30C after the name. You can take the pills right under the tongue, or dissolve in water and sip as needed. You might need to repeat the dose once or twice but you should feel relief within 15 minutes or it's probably not the correct choice for you.

RESCUE REMEDY: Musicians' best friend! This combination of Bach Flower Remedies (of course!) is one of the best products on the market. Everyone should keep some in their case for emergencies, such as "Thought We Were Rehearsing This Piece Tomorrow!" or "Section Leader Slips on Banana Peel Backstage, That Solo Is Yours!" Put four drops right under your tongue, or better yet, camouflaged in a bottle of plain water. Every sip is a dose; what could be better than that? It can also be really helpful to get over those post-audition didn't-make-the-finals blues.

After the Gig

ARNICA is brilliant for speeding the healing cycle after overuse of muscles when that last 15 minutes of the symphony was really more than you needed – not to mention the last act of the opera! You can take this in pills or drops like other remedies and it also comes in a cream if you can reach the part that hurts.

EPSOM SALTS: Everyone can benefit from soaking in the old standby, Epsom salts. It is a great way to absorb magnesium and sulphur into your muscles and it also draws out toxins like excess lactic acid. The hot bath is good for your soul, too. Don't skimp – the whole box is only a dollar, go ahead and put it all in. If you don't have a bathtub, put half a cup in a bucket and soak your feet.

Repetitive Strain

There are some remedies that can relieve the pain of sore shoulders, elbows, and wrists that result from playing without warming up or failing to take care of our bodies with good regular exercise like swimming, yoga, qigong or pilates. Choose **RUTA GRAVEOLENS** if the trouble is centred in the wrists. **RHUS TOX** is great for any joint problem that starts out stiff and limbers up as you

get going, or feels much better after a hot shower or bath. Chronic conditions are not like the intense urgency of performance nerves; it takes a while to feel any change. Take a dose of either one, two, or three pills under the tongues twice a day for a week or two. You should know in that time if it is helping. You should back off and try to find the minimum dose that works for you because if you just carry on taking it too frequently, you will eventually start to experience new symptoms just from overdoing the remedy.

These suggestions are offered in the spirit of providing safe, easy, non-addictive things anyone can try for relieving stress. If they don't work for you it doesn't mean you can't be helped with natural treatments. I would be pleased to talk with you in confidence any time about how homeopathy and other natural tools could help you manage stress or other health challenges (519-635-1656 or <heal@tracypoizner.com>).

This advice is for *information purposes only* and is not intended to replace medical attention.

MPF Canada Member Self-Serve

The Musicians' Pension Fund of Canada is pleased to launch a Member Self-Serve Web site in the Fall of 2014.

Member Self-Serve will allow our members to independently access the system to change their address, to see their contribution details, to view pension payment details, and to prepare pension benefit estimates. Go to the Fund's home page at <<http://www.mpfcanda.ca>> for the official launch date.

MPF Canada welcomes feedback, comments, and suggestions on the Member Self-Serve System at: <info@mpfcanda.ca>.

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OCSM Executive Officers

(term of office in parentheses)

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