



UNA VOCE

May 2009 Vol. 16 No. 1

Wanted: New Editor(s) for *Una Voce*

Greetings to all my colleagues: As you have noticed, this is the only print issue of *Una Voce* going out this season. I thank everyone, especially the OCSM Executive, for their patience as we try our best to keep lines of communication flowing. Unfortunately, due to increased workload, I am no longer able to keep up with the duties of OCSM Secretary, *Una Voce* Editor, and compiler of the OCSM Directory, in addition to my professional and personal life outside of OCSM. Therefore, I have asked the Executive to accept my resignation as Editor of *Una Voce*, and we are putting out a notice in this issue that we are looking for replacements. Incidentally, at one time in OCSM's history, the Secretary position on the OCSM Executive was shared by two people, and both the Directory and *Una Voce* were produced by separate people apart from the Executive.

You will note my use of the plural (editors) instead of the singular. Part of my challenge in producing *Una Voce* is that it mainly comes down to me to put content together. I fully believe that this burden should be shared by more than one person. As a member of the OCSM Executive, I will continue to contribute to the content of *Una Voce*, as will the other members of the Executive, but I hope we can find one or more persons to take on the Editor's job.

Every summer at the OCSM Conference, we strike an Editorial Committee to discuss OCSM's internal communications: the Directory, *Una Voce*, bargaining settlement bulletins, Conductor Evaluations, the Delegate Handbook, the OCSM website and the OCSM e-mail list. I have devoted space in more than one issue of *Una Voce* to a discussion of print versus electronic communication. In spite of the fact that almost all of our 1100+ members have e-mail addresses and access to the Internet, there is still strong support for preserving at least some of our printed communication. Therefore, at the last OCSM Conference, the Editorial Committee decided that we should try to produce both a print and on-line version of *Una Voce*. The print version would contain official reports from the Conference, and more in-depth articles, and have less focus on news items. An on-line version would focus more on short items of news of a timely nature: a job action, a settlement bulletin, a report from a recent tour, etc. This on-line version of *Una Voce* would be similar to *Sound Bytes/Bloc notes* produced on a regular basis by Orchestras Canada.

There is an honorarium in OCSM's budget for the *Una Voce* Editor. If the duties of Editor are to be divided, we will obviously have to revisit the amounts, and this will be discussed when the Delegates approve our annual budget at the Conference this summer.

Therefore, we are looking for the following:

1) A person with computer skills who can assemble an on-line version of a newsletter and come up with creative solutions for distribution to our 1100+ members;

2) A person with a "nose for news" who can assist the 20 OCSM Delegates in reporting on what is happening "right now" in their respective orchestras (attention all you bloggers!);

3) A person who can find and report on topics of interest for a more in-depth treatment in a print issue of *Una Voce*, such as musicians' health issues, best management practices, union-related issues, book reviews, or the history of our organization and its member orchestras.

I realize that this is a tall order. Many of you probably have problems filling all your own orchestra's internal committees, and, if my orchestra is any indication, you are probably performing a lot more than you used to. However, I firmly believe that this is work worth doing. I have been involved with OCSM for ten years now, and I have learned a great deal through attendance at conferences, a close working relationship with officers and delegates, and through communication. I have said it before on these pages, and I'll conclude by repeating it here: for me, the purpose of OCSM is so we need not be alone. When our orchestras face challenges, or when we have successes, OCSM allows us to share those burdens/successes with one another.

I hope you had a good season, and wish you all the best for the summer months.

Bob Fraser, OCSM Secretary

President's Report

Francine Schutzman

There have been several articles in *Una Voce* over the years that discuss what OCSM means to its members, and it seems to be time to repeat that message. Many of you take advantage of the lower-than-average **instrument insurance rates** offered to OCSM members by HED. However, we are much more than an insurance package. Our orchestras provide information for the **wage charts** that are produced for each symphonic conference within the AFM. These are particularly important during negotiations, when we're all interested in seeing how our wages and working conditions stack up against those with similar budgets.

The OCSM newsletter, *Una Voce*, has traditionally been the way that most of us connect with the organization. I am sure that you have noticed that this is the first issue of *Una Voce* that you have received this year, and it may be the only one. We are looking for a new editor. This is an opportunity for one of our 1100 members to seek out and disseminate information that is useful to all of us. You don't have to write the newsletter, but if you do have something that you'd like others to read, here's your chance. You needn't be an

OCSM delegate – just someone who has an eye out for newsworthy items.

We are not looking for just an editor. I don't know how many of your orchestras had the privilege of working with Ron Bauers, accountant and financial analyst extraordinaire with a gift for solving some of the mysteries hidden in the financial reports of our organizations. Ron's help was invaluable during negotiations, and it was available as a shared expense between the AFM and the Local. Ron passed away suddenly last fall, so the AFM is looking for a replacement for him. If you have used the services of someone like Ron as you prepared for negotiations, and if that person is interested in working for other groups as well, please send me his or her name and contact information.

OCSM has long run a **conductor evaluation database**. In response to a question asked of the delegates recently, we have learned that the results of those evaluations are indeed used for conductor searches. They will always be necessary and relevant. So is the **OCSM Relief Fund**. We don't have a large amount of money in the fund, so it acts as a supplement to the AFM strike fund. But there is money there that goes to the orchestra as a whole, not to individuals.

At the annual **OCSM conference**, delegates come together to discuss problems, solutions, and goals. This is the only chance for the OCSM Executive, the delegates, Symphonic Services employees, the AFM Vice President from Canada and other representatives from the AFM International Executive Board to get to know each other's needs and to exchange ideas. It is probably the most important thing that we do. OCSM is unique among the symphonic conferences in that we encompass groups with such a wide range of budgets, compensation and season lengths. One might think that it was just a chance for the larger-budget orchestras to show the smaller ones how things should be done (if only they had the money!), but I find every year, and I hear from others, that we all have an opportunity to learn from one another, regardless of the status of our orchestras. It is the responsibility of each delegate to take that information back to his or her orchestra, and it is the responsibility of each orchestra to elect someone as OCSM delegate whom they can count on to share that information. We are only as good as our elected representatives. It must also be noted that delegates can be of great value to their Locals if they take back to them the topics and issues that we discuss at the OCSM conference. I was recently at a meeting of the OCSM media committee with representatives of various Locals, and I was most gratified to hear two of the Local reps talk about how much they learn each year at the conference, and how much it helps them in their work throughout the year.

The conversation that is started each year at the conference is continued via the **OCSM e-list**. This is your chance to take part in the discussion. Chime in with your thoughts. If you don't like what's being written, say so. Please don't wait until afterwards to say that a certain discussion should or shouldn't have taken place. This is your list, and you are the ones with ownership of it.

The **OCSM Executive** works throughout the year on behalf of OCSM. This year, as an ex-officio member of the board of Orchestras Canada, I have taken part in two OC teleconferences and will be participating in a face-to-face board meeting preceding the

AGM in Quebec City in May. I will also be representing OCSM at the AFM Canadian Conference in Montreal in June, at a meeting with the IEB and the other heads of the AFM players' conferences in Las Vegas in June, and at the ROPA and ICSOM annual conferences in August. I was on the interview team for the post of head of SSD for the AFM, and I speak with the other members of the players' conference council from time to time via teleconference. The OCSM board meets via SKYPE whenever we are able to coordinate our too-busy schedules – not as frequently as we would like, unfortunately – and we keep in touch via email. We used to have a face-to-face mid-winter meeting but have eliminated that for the past two years in order to keep costs down. Instead, we have a marathon teleconference.

Next summer is the **AFM Convention**, and the players' conferences are invited to submit resolutions for consideration by the convention delegates. There are many areas of AFM legislation to deal with, and the players' conferences are the vehicles by which items that affect us most directly are presented. This could be your only chance to change things within the AFM. Take a look at the AFM bylaws. It doesn't take that long to go through the articles that deal with symphony orchestras, for a start. See if there are changes that you would like to propose. Take those to your OCSM delegate for discussion at this summer's conference in Thunder Bay. Orchestras contribute over half of the work dues collected by the AFM each year, but we are still struggling to find our proper place within the AFM. You can help.

OCSM is more than meetings and talk. It has a role as a representative of the entire professional Canadian orchestral community in **arts advocacy** representation with various governments. Without the benefit of an organization like OCSM all the orchestras are essentially on their own. The value of having a national organization cannot be stated strongly enough.

It is **support for our colleagues** throughout Canada and the US. Some of us are lucky enough to live in cities that have supportive AFM Locals and/or good orchestra managements. Those who are not are more likely to call an OCSM officer to ask for help, or to ask a question on the OCSM e-list. The whole concept of unionism is that those who are in better positions set standards for those who do not enjoy such lucky circumstances – that we help each other in ways both real and intangible.

We are living in "interesting times," as the Chinese saying goes. We are all aware that our orchestras are facing greater challenges than many of us can remember having experienced in the past. What we have not heard so much about is the fact that the Calgary Philharmonic is enjoying an increase in ticket sales and donations, the Montreal Symphony has embarked upon an ambitious – and very busy – European tour, the Winnipeg Symphony's New Music Festival, which has just celebrated its nineteenth year, continues to attract 18,000 – 20,000 people each season., and the NAC Orchestra has sold more subscriptions for the 2008-2009 season than any previous season since 1988.

It certainly seems as if now, more than ever, people need what we have to offer. Let us all remember that and build on it.

OCSM Media Committee meets to discuss Internet Agreement for Canadian Orchestras

The OCSM Media Committee had an April meeting in Toronto at the invitation of Bill Skolnik, AFM-VP from Canada. The OCSM delegates had endorsed a resolution to have the AFM promulgate a Canadian internet agreement (in other words, the AFM simply sets the rates). There have been expressions of interest by some of our managers to have a negotiated agreement, whereby they take part in establishing the conditions, so the committee discussed which conditions we musicians would like to see, whether they be for a promulgated agreement, a negotiated one, or simply guidelines for our negotiating teams when our collective bargaining agreements are renewed. At the moment, our orchestras are using a variety of agreements, either negotiated locally or borrowed from other places, to disseminate concerts via the internet, and it has been a wish of OCSM's to have universal standards that apply across the country. The media committee has long been intended to be a standing one, but this is the first time in many years that we have met mid-season. We all felt that the meeting was both well-prepared and productive, for which you can thank your delegates on the committee – Rob McCosh, Arlene Dahl, Alison Mah-Poy, David Thies-Thompson and Jim Spragg. We had valuable input from Bill Skolnik, Alan Willaert (in charge of media for the Toronto AFM office), Mark Tetreault and Bernard Leblanc of SSD Canada, Mylène Cyr of the Montreal Guild, and Jim Biros of the Toronto Musicians' Association. Contact Mark Tetreault or me for a copy of the guidelines.

Francine Schutzman

Mid-Season Reports

Courtesy of your OCSM Delegates

Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra

At the beginning of the season our administration announced that, for the second year in a row, we have a balanced budget. This is indeed exciting news. There are been several changes in our administrative staff, with new marketing, development and production personnel. The changes seem positive.

Our Music Director search launched this year with the auditioning our first candidate in November. The Music Director search will continue for this season and all next season. So far this has been an exciting experience with a great deal of community buzz.

Our Tour East was a grand musical success with some interesting education programs given in Marathon and Manitouwadge.

We had a successful musician-initiated fundraiser that raised over \$5,000 for the orchestra. Members of our orchestra offered non-musical services to our patrons in a silent auction held over the month of December. Some items offered in the auction were cooking lessons, gourmet dinners, bread-making lessons and math tutoring.

As the declining economy hits our patrons and sponsors, our Administration is bracing for the perceived economic crisis to affect our bottom line. In an attempt to address the anticipated budget shortfall, the Board has resolved to cut \$20,000 from our budget and raise an additional \$20,000. In an already tight budget, they have yet to determine how that will happen.

Regina Symphony Orchestra

It is our Centennial season, so we have had a lot of support for extra activities this year from both the City of Regina (an extra \$45,000) and the Province (an extra \$200,000). We had a Gala Concert in early December, exactly 100 years to the day since our first concert in 1908. People drank, ate, visited, reminisced, dressed up in costumes, and listened to us perform some "light music". By all accounts it appeared to be successful. With the extra funds from the Province, we are planning a Spring tour of southern Saskatchewan. By all accounts, the orchestra is in good shape financially.

Our new Executive Director is Natasha Bood. She has greatly improved communications amongst staff, board and orchestra. Suffice to say, we are all pleased with how she is doing. She has some great ideas.

We are still negotiating at the time of this writing, but should be finished by the time this report is published. The musicians are feeling optimistic about it, and somewhat relieved, as we have been without a contract since May of 2007.

Our Pops concerts always sell out, which is great. We also have the "Video Games Live" show coming in May, which is definitely going to sell out. Our Masterworks series have been doing well enough... the audience looks good from the stage, although, apparently, a lot of the audience has complimentary tickets, so we are trying to sell more, of course.

Our Local has a new Secretary-Treasurer, Moneca Wollis. We are hoping to become a certified bargaining unit with the Province of Saskatchewan, but currently we're focusing on completion of negotiations.

Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra

It has been an uplifting year for most of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. We have a new board of 14 highly motivated and positive people, a new interim conductor (Earl Stafford), and a rejuvenated group of musicians. The response of the public has been overwhelming. There are more people in the seats (and paying ones too), and an enthusiastic response to the concert programming. Even the media critics like us! The level of co-operation between management and musicians has never been higher.

Of course, we have a long ways to go to financial security. At present we are still searching for a permanent General Manager. The situation with the Principal Cello position has not yet been resolved.

National Arts Centre Orchestra

The National Arts Centre Orchestra is enjoying a relatively quiet season. There have been two noteworthy events: a Western tour and the signing of our CBA.

The tour began the last week of October and lasted for two and a half weeks. We played in ten different cities, from Victoria to Winnipeg. The concerts in Saskatoon and Winnipeg were fundraisers for the Saskatoon Symphony and the Winnipeg

Symphony, respectively. Our visit to Vancouver will be returned when the Vancouver Symphony plays in Ottawa as part of the BC Scene in May – their first concert here in many years.

The Western tour marked our first visit to the Yukon. We played two concerts in Whitehorse (one of them for children) to most enthusiastic audiences. Since the concert hall there is so small, we could easily have spent a week there, playing a concert every night.

We had our annual exchange with the Toronto Symphony, with the TSO playing in Ottawa in November and NACO returning the visit in January. On this occasion, and throughout the Western tour, we were treated to extraordinary hospitality by our colleagues in other orchestras.

The CBA was finally signed in the early hours of November 27th, after a marathon all-night session. This followed many months of on-and-off negotiations, a declared impasse, and a lot of frustration. For that final session, which was arranged at the last minute, no lawyers were present. The settlement allows for very modest increases over three years.

Our tour to China was first postponed and then cancelled. Now it appears that touring will be put on hold for the foreseeable future. It is too difficult to obtain the necessary sponsorship in the current economic climate.

Audiences could be a lot better. It is rare to see a sold-out house, but the galas do well, and the musicians of the orchestra beat their previous record of pre-holiday fundraising for the Food Bank and Snowsuit Fund, donating a total of \$62,527 to the two charities.

We continue to make good music, and we are enjoying the contributions of our new concertmaster, Yosuke Kawasaki.

Orchestra London Canada

It has been a difficult season for Orchestra London; many of you will be aware of the financial crisis that has hit us. We have a \$750,000 accumulated deficit, which could be as high as \$1 million by the end of the season. There was a hard-fought and very public battle to receive a loan guarantee of \$500,000 from the City of London to ensure that we can get through the season. It was approved by a majority vote of City Council. Without it we would be out of work now.

Immediately preceding the City Council vote to approve the loan guarantee, the Board received the resignation of our Executive Director Rob Gloor. The search will soon begin for a new Executive Director. We are receiving help and guidance from facilitator Joe Swan, a former City of London politician, who is assisting in our management transition and re-visioning of the orchestra in the community.

As the financial crisis became apparent early in the season, the musicians agreed to a 16.8% salary cut for the 2009-2010 season. Cuts were shared across the board, including the Music Director, staff, IATSE and Executive Director. Because the loan guarantee from the City of London had stipulations as to how big the deficit could be for 2008-2009, it is yet to be determined whether additional cuts will have to be proposed.

At the same time, the former ED cancelled our Discovery Series (three concerts of contemporary music) and our Masterworks series is cut from two performances to one. There are also many

unused services this season. Our budget will be reduced next season by cutting discretionary artistic expenses (guest artists and guest conductors, extras, doubling, music rental etc...), salaries, and administration costs (marketing). As a result of these cuts, the budget is shrinking from \$4.2 million to \$3.5 million next season.

The Board, with a few new members, is committed to put things right. The morale is generally low amongst musicians and the orchestra is getting a lot of bad press in the local media, mostly as a result of a few conservative city councillors talking to sympathetic reporters. Three unhappy councillors make for better newspaper sales than fourteen happy ones.

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

The TSO season began with a very successful educational tour to North Bay and Timmins. We played concerts both as a full orchestra and as small groups, and played for over 7,500 children and countless adults at the two evening performances. The children's concerts were in both French and English. A special thanks to the education department.

The regular season started on September 17, with an exciting week that featured Lang Lang, and many excellent weeks followed.

We did our annual exchange concert with the NACO in October, and in November, returned to Carnegie Hall for the first time in over ten years. The reception from the audience was unimaginable. One wonderful thing for us was that well over 110 "fans" joined a side tour that followed us from Toronto. They outnumbered the members of the orchestra, and were extremely excited to be there and rub shoulders with us. They were treated very well by our development department, and kept busy with many of the touristy New York things, as well as attending the concert. They still talk about it.

Our concerts continue to be well-attended.

The Annual General Meeting was held in November, and of interest to us all was that the previous season ended showing a small surplus. This marks the third season in a row with a surplus. We owe a huge expression of gratitude to our hard working management.

We are joined this year by two new members: Assistant Principal Viola, Eric Nowlin, and Principal Harpist, Julie Barnes Spring.

Our 2009-10 Season was launched on February 3. We hope for continued success for the rest of this season.

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

The Winnipeg Symphony remains on budget due in some measure to a number of sold-out performances during the holiday season. We have just completed the 17th New Music Festival, and there are plans underway for the first WSO "Indigenous Festival" to be held later in the season with live performances celebrating music, art, dancing, singing and multi-media expressions. The operation is stable under our new Executive Director, Trudy Schroeder.

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

Our last contract (July 2006 – January 2009) has just expired and we are in the initial stages of negotiating a new agreement. The Winter Olympics, which are taking place in Vancouver in 2010, have caused some concerns for arts groups in Vancouver due to lack of

availability of the required venues and also increased security and access issues. Our negotiating committee is currently discussing some Olympic-based scheduling issues with management before moving on to the other areas of the negotiations.

The impact and duration of the present economic downturn is still difficult to determine and this will obviously be a significant factor in our negotiating process. The orchestra has been enjoying a run of good recognition locally and internationally after winning a Grammy award for our recording with James Ehnes last season and completing our two week trip to South Korea, Macau and China this past October. The VSO was featured in the January 2009 edition of the *International Musician* for our recording in September of all the participating countries' national anthems for the 2010 Olympics. At this time, however, we are still waiting to learn if we are to be included in the opening ceremonies. This April, the VSO will be performing at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, as part of the "BC Scene," and will also be performing in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City. We are really looking forward to seeing many of our friends and colleagues on this tour.

In general, our ticket sales and attendance have been quite good but the real test will be how our subscription renewal campaigns for next season fare. Funding is, of course, impacted by corporations, foundations and individual donors reducing their contributions in the face of financial uncertainty, but then it would seem that all arts groups and charitable organizations are in the same boat as far as this is concerned. Despite the challenges that this presents we are fortunate to have a capable, dedicated management team and board of directors. We are hopeful that things will improve in the near future and we can continue to implement some of the stated goals contained in our 5 year strategic plan (higher orchestra salaries, a longer season, a larger orchestra, summer facility, etc.)

Victoria Symphony

The Victoria Symphony began its season with the ratification of a three-year collective bargaining agreement, with salary increases of 4-5-5% over the three seasons, plus added weeks in the second and third season, bringing the number of paid weeks from 33 to 36. There were also increases in pension, extra relief and business leave services, and other changes that reflect the ever-growing workload of the musicians.

Before the season began, we received the resignation of our Executive Director, Marcus Handman, who left us to take a position with the International Photographer's Guild. We were fortunate to have had Marcus for four years, and everyone in the VS organization expressed regret at his leaving us. Thankfully, Stephen Smith, our General Manager from 1985-2000, was available and stepped into the position of Interim Executive Director until the end of January, 2009.

A search committee was struck immediately in September and by December a new ED had been found. Mitchell Krieger officially joined the organization on January 27. He comes to us from New Jersey, and has an extensive background in music, opera and theatre.

While grant income is stable, ticket sales are softer than our previous season, and as a result we have had to substantially re-work two programmes in order to break even this year. The New

Currents Festival, our new music event in early February, was slightly scaled down and moved to a less-expensive venue, and the third concert of our Odyssey series, featuring a collaboration with cross-over and hip-hop artists, was cancelled entirely and is being replaced with a classical programme (Mozart/Haydn/Beethoven) sold to venues up-Island in Mill Bay and Courtenay. The summer season planned for 2009 is now part of our agreement, but the Society is unable to launch a full summer festival with a new ED just coming in, so they are meeting their obligation to the musicians through more sold services, to keep production costs to a minimum. The Board and Music Director are fully committed to producing a major summer festival in 2010.

The cuts to the season are unfortunate, but the "pain" has been shared across the organization, and all obligations to core musicians have been kept (the number of services lost to extras has been smaller than other similar cuts in previous seasons). The Board, Music Director and Interim ED have made generous financial contributions toward our bottom line, and are committed to major fund-raising within the community in order to ride out the recession.

The programming of Music Director Tania Miller is challenging and ambitious: we began the season with an all-Wagner gala with soprano Jane Eaglen, and we have performed large-scale works such as Nielsen's Fourth Symphony (the "Inextinguishable") and Strauss's "Eine Alpensinfonie." The latter work was our fourth collaboration with the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra, and the students (most of them are of university age) handled the challenge remarkably.

The musicians welcomed the appointment of Alain Trudel as our Principal Guest Conductor, beginning in the 2009-10 season. We also recently announced the appointment of Rodney Sharman as our new composer-in-residence.

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

The fall season opened with a successful gala concert with Renée Fleming as the featured artist. Her singing was inspiring and she was a pleasure to work with. On a completely different note, we recently performed a Sci-Fi evening with narration by George Takei ("Sulu" from the original "Star Trek" cast) and Jack Everly conducting that was enormously well received. We're doing more and more of these block-buster pops extravaganzas and we're told that next year the administration is cutting six performances out of our Master's Series. This is obviously disappointing news.

We have welcomed several new members into the orchestra this year and their talent, energy and enthusiasm are remarkable.

We are undersized in both the strings and winds and there is no built-in relief that is inherent in a full-sized orchestra. I believe a player working under our schedule has to learn how to pace themselves and preserve their energy or they will burn out not only physically but mentally. We have an administration that is sympathetic but finds it difficult to accommodate this problem, as it involves more expenditures on musicians.

We are in the middle of a four-year agreement and with the fears about this economy, the orchestra is very happy not to be negotiating at this time. The organization has not been impacted financially by the downturn as we had sold tickets for this season before the market collapse. Although Alberta has enjoyed a boom

economy for the past several years there is concern shared by administration and musicians that next year will be much more challenging for ticket sales and fund-raising. We'll have to wait and see after the season launch in early April. Edmontonians have always had a great affection for the orchestra, and we feel that this will continue to manifest itself in well-attended concerts and successful fund-raising events, in spite of a slow-down. There is a sense that Alberta will not be impacted greatly by the financial shenanigans of Wall Street, but we may be living in our own, oily, dream-world.

The relationship between musicians and administration seems to be always improving. Recently the management received funding from the Canada Council to bring in a facilitator, and that person was Paul Boulian, whom you may remember was a guest speaker at the 2007 OCSM conference. Paul raised more questions than he had answers for, which is not surprising. All of these consultants, and we have had many, have great ideas but they have never have to stick around and try and implement them. If anything, the most important thing that Paul may have given the administration and board the feeling that "Yes, We Can!" ride this one out.

Windsor Symphony Orchestra

The Windsor Symphony is facing several significant challenges. The most recent statistics have Windsor's unemployment rate listed at 10.9%, and with more and more auto and manufacturing closures happening, our sponsorship and donations have declined. Our hall was recently sold by the city to the St. Clair Community College, which announced this fall a rental increase of 13%, and warned of a similar increase next season. These concerns, combined with essentially no income from our endowment, have necessitated our asking the City of Windsor for a \$300,000 loan. Thankfully, in early March, this loan was approved, thanks to a strong business plan and the support of the community. All of this has had an impact on our current round of negotiations, of course. On the brighter side however, our shows are continuing to sell quite well and the orchestra sounds very good. We continue to have some very dedicated individuals amongst management and the board who are determined to persevere and have newly launched a Sustainability Campaign to help see us through.

National Ballet of Canada Orchestra

The National Ballet of Canada season started off in good financial health. A press release from October 16 announced that the company had finished the 2007-2008 season with a surplus of \$168,000. Music Director David Briskin has been able to enlarge the string section of the orchestra by regularly hiring extra players. It has been very nice to have that big, rich sound from the strings, and great that more people are getting work. The program for the current season (2008-09) includes a few old favourites such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Giselle*, and *The Nutcracker*, and a number of new works, including the full length ballet *The Seagull* and a mixed programme with three new commissioned works by Canadian Choreographers. The 2009-10 season has just been announced, and is designed to sell more seats in a time of recession. In addition to *The Nutcracker*, there will be three of the most popular full-length ballets: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *Olegin*. Three mixed programs round out the year with a mixture of recent favourites and world premieres.

For the second year in a row, the National Ballet did a simulcast of a *Nutcracker* performance. This show was beamed live into movie theatres across Canada on December 13, and was broadcast on television the next week by Bravo. The first year it was done it was a success from all points of view: it looked and sounded good and the attendance in theatres was good. This year the technical aspects of shooting the production were not as good: the orchestra sounded unbalanced and the picture was often too dark. Also, attendance was down in the theatres across the country. Although all were a little disappointed with how the simulcast worked out this year, the orchestra and dancers were happy about the extra pay it provided.

The National Ballet Orchestra will be participating in an exercise to monitor sound levels during our run of *Romeo and Juliet* in March, 2009. Alberto Behar of the University of Toronto is leading a team of students from the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering where Alberto is a Research Associate. They will monitor two rehearsals and nine performances to assess the risk of hearing loss and attempt to identify areas of the pit which are most hazardous. The impetus of this study is found in our new agreement negotiated in the spring of 2008 that directs the company to follow guidelines established by the Health and Safety Advisory for Live Performance.

The Health and Safety Advisory is a committee established by the Ontario Ministry of Labour to develop guidelines for theatre, opera, dance and music. Representatives from labour, management, and independent groups sit at the table to work out best practices for everything ranging from stage weaponry to pyrotechnic effects to performer flying. One of the members of this committee is also a member of our orchestra.

In the 2008/09 season the National Ballet is using the orchestra's 120 guaranteed services for main stage productions, so we are not playing concerts in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre as we did last year. Of these 120 services, 39 have been scheduled for rehearsals and 80 for performances. Two vacant positions have been successfully filled by audition. The relationship between management and Player's Committee is good, involving plenty of meetings to resolve a few issues and avoid problems in the future.

Canadian Opera Company Orchestra

We have had a wonderful, excitement-filled opening to our 2008-09 season. The orchestra began with Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Prokofiev's *War and Peace* (rarely performed because of the enormous forces required on- and off-stage). Our newly appointed Managing Director, German born Alexander Neef, took over the helm. Alexander has worked with some of the most prestigious arts organizations in the world such as Opera National de Paris and the New York City Opera. His first order of business was to find a new Music Director. Everyone was anticipating a two- or three-year search to fill this position, however, the conductor for *War and Peace*, Johannes Debus, created such chemistry and admiration from orchestra, chorus, soloists and management, that the decision to hire him immediately led to the announcement of his appointment on January 8, 2009. To quote our concertmaster, Marie Berard: "The COC Orchestra is very happy to have such a skilled, generous and communicative musician as our music director, and we are anxious to work with him next season and beyond. We haven't felt this kind

of energy about a conductor since Richard Bradshaw, and it's fantastic to be so excited about someone. We are extremely pleased."

Mr. Debus will conduct the company's Diamond Anniversary Celebration concert starring superstar Canadian tenor Ben Heppner on November 7, 2009. He also conducts the COC's signature production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* in April/May, 2010. A native of Germany and born in 1974, Mr. Debus has already established a reputation for himself in many of the great opera houses and festivals of Europe.

The Canadian Opera Company celebrates its 60th anniversary this coming 2009-10 season. We enter this anniversary on solid financial ground. The company has maintained a surplus for the sixth consecutive season. Box office revenues for 2007-08 increased by 16% over the previous season, excluding the Ring Cycle productions. This past season saw an increase in activity to 66 performances of seven main stage productions. Performances are, for the most part, sold out.

Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra

The first half of the 2008-09 season centred around a festival comprised of performances of the complete cycle of Beethoven Symphonies, with live recordings made of the fifth and eighth symphonies for future CD release. The Beethoven Festival generated a lot of positive publicity for the orchestra and with that came excellent ticket sales. However, houses have been inconsistent for other main series performances, ranging from half-full to sold-out. The musicians are in the final year of a three-year agreement and have the challenge of negotiating during a recession.

Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal

The 2008-09 season celebrates the 75th anniversary year of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. We opened with a national TV broadcast on Radio Canada from Studio 42. The evening paid tribute to all the past music directors, included interviews with famous soloists, footage from past concerts, and the orchestra performed with Maestro Kent Nagano along with Lang Lang. The official opening concert was Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*.

Memorable concerts so far include several from past music directors, Zubin Mehta, Franz-Paul Decker and Raphael Frubeck de Burgos, an amazing performance by Joshua Bell of Corigliano's *Red Violin Concerto*, and most recently Anne-Sophie Mutter, Radu Lupu and Neeme Jarvi.

The biggest event so far was the mounting of a concert version of Olivier Messiaen's *St. Francis of Assisi* in December. This was a 5-hour and 10-minute long production which included 2 intermissions. Surprisingly, it sold quite well. Although not everyone stayed until the end, those who did stay were very appreciative and enthusiastic (even at 11:10pm!). What seemed like an impossible task was actually pretty incredible in the end.

We are continuing to record live concerts and finish with touch-up sessions. In December, we recorded Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto and in January, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Things for the most part appear rosy. The house is pretty much full most of the time. Relations with management seem to be alright, although there have been major changes in upper management. The musician's committee continues to meet regularly

with Maestro Nagano whenever he is in town. We are getting used to working a different mode when the Maestro is here, overdrive! There seem to be more rehearsals, services in the evening, three-hour rehearsals, and always overtime. The public still responds very well to all of his concerts.

The upcoming three-week tour to Europe is quickly approaching. It should be a rigorous tour; 13 concerts in 19 days in April 2009.

Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra

We were sad to lose our Executive Director, Alex Baran, but we have hired a new Executive Director as of January 1st, named Annelisa Pedersen. She is young, energetic and smart, and we are optimistic that she will work out well.

We have a new small concert series called the "Elegance series." It is for smaller orchestra and is in a different, smaller venue. We also have a student concerto competition in the spring. The winner will play with the orchestra. Other than that, things are running fairly smoothly and uneventfully.

Orchestre Métropolitain

The Fall season at Orchestre Métropolitain was both busy and interesting. The first concert of our regular season included *La Valse* by Ravel which Yannick conducted most convincingly, bien sûr! The musicians were invited to a reception after the Place des Arts performance of this program, and the donations we had been hearing about in recent months were announced officially: a total of \$550,000, enough to erase our debt and leave us with money in the bank!

Our subscriptions are up 15% this season, as they were last year. The highlight of our second programme was definitely the outstanding performance of Murray Schafer's *The darkly splendid earth: The lonely traveler* given night after night by our principal second violin, Noémie Racine-Gaudreault.

While playing this program all over town, we were invited to a meeting with our new GM, Luce Moreau, and the president of our board, Michelle Cormier, for an update and discussions on the creation of a strategic committee that would include several musicians. It was a good meeting, one that left us feeling very encouraged. Of course, there is a financial crisis now that will make things more difficult, but we feel we have a really excellent team working for us and that we are as set to go as anyone could hope.

The rest of the Fall was devoted to Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and two opera productions, plus our usual Gala de l'Opéra de Montréal engagement. Then came our usual two months of inactivity that ended in early February. There is much talk of avoiding this in the future by adding an eighth production to our regular series.

Our latest recording, Bruckner's 9th Symphony, on ATMA, came out in September.

Orchestre Symphonique de Québec

The 400th anniversary of Québec City and the ending of these festivities marked the 2008-2009 season at OSQ. Among the activities held in Québec during the autumn was the Operalia competition, under the artistic direction of Plácido Domingo. The finals with orchestra were broadcast by CBC Radio as well as European television network Mezzo. The OSQ administration and the musicians participated in an information and discussion session

about the financial situation of the OSQ. The finances have been stabilized, but the next few seasons will be crucial to the long-term health of the corporation.

The *Hommage* series of OSQ's 2008-09 season is a tribute to Haydn (including a performance of *The Creation*) and Mendelssohn. Some of the latter's works will be included on a CD recording this coming spring, with pianist Louis Lortie and conductor Yoav Talmi. In addition to its regular concerts at the *Grand Théâtre de Québec*, OSQ is playing at the *Palais Montcalm* for the new *Musique du Monde* series. OSQ also performed two concerts in Québec City boroughs as well as a run-out concert in Trois-Rivières. Airat Ichmouratov was hired as assistant resident conductor for next season, following our November auditions. Much appreciated by the musicians, a training week was held in January by kinesiologists Marc Papillon and Philippe Chamagne, from Paris' *Clinique du musicien et de la performance musicale*. Finally, the OSQ was recently awarded two *Prix Opus* for its production of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand*: concert of the year, and concert of the year for the Québec City area.

The 2008-09 season also marks the beginning of a new mode of operation regarding the work dues collected from the salaries of the members of AMMOSQ (*Association des Musiciens et Musiciennes de l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec*). AMMOSQ was certified as a bargaining unit in 1990 under the *Code du travail* Québec law. It is more than a year later that the *Guilde des Musiciens et Musiciennes du Québec*, AFM Local 406 (GMMQ) was recognized as the bargaining unit for professional musicians working in Québec, under the *Loi sur le statut de l'artiste*. For many years, this situation was the cause of legal jurisdiction conflicts. Both parties have found an amicable solution to this problem. To fix it, the GMMQ has asked AMMOSQ themselves to collect and manage the work dues from its members.

Following a vote taken in July, the GMMQ is relieved from its responsibilities towards the members of AMMOSQ. The latter now has the entire responsibility to represent, protect and negotiate for its members under the *Code du travail*. It is important to note that our current and future collective bargaining agreements require that all musicians working with OSQ be members of the GMMQ. A service agreement was ratified between AMMOSQ and the GMMQ, to maintain the musicians' contributions to the AFM-EPW Fund. On a last note, the work of extras, as well as work done for OSQ by regular players outside of their contract, is done under the rule of the GMMQ, which collects the work dues in these cases.

The 2008-09 season is the last of four seasons covered by our current collective bargaining agreement. The negotiations between AMMOSQ and OSQ are following due course. General work conditions, including the work schedule management, and wages, are among the topics being discussed.

Please note: at press time, no report was received from Symphony Nova Scotia.

Subsequent to the press time, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony's report was removed at the request of their Players' Committee.
