



UNA VOCE

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ON BEYOND HED

(A Message from the President)

Every year about this time we hear the common refrains: Awhat does OCSM do for me or why do I have to pay OCSM dues?@ So I took some time to think through just what OCSM and its delegates and executive do during the course of a year and in particular the past year.

So lets deal first of all with the tangibles. HED is the name of the insurance company with whom OCSM/OMOSC has an exclusive arrangement. With the exception of the TSO, virtually every member orchestra takes part in this instrument insurance program. The OCSM newsletter, *Una Voce*, brings you up to date on various issues as well as offering informed opinion and educational articles. We publish a directory of our members every year; have a relief fund which musicians from Hamilton and the OSM were able to access; and have a data bank which compiles information about conductors which is very useful come conductor search time.

OCSM/OMOSC puts on an annual conference. This is a forum for your orchestra=s story to be heard; ideas to be shared and exchanged; and is often very cathartic for a delegate whose orchestra has faced a tough year. During the conference, negotiating workshops are held with the staff from SSD Canada and New York; presentations are made by related organizations such as the Canada Council, Orchestras Canada and Department of Canadian Heritage; and educational seminars such as this year=s ACore Competencies of Effective Unions@ are given.

OCSM/OMOSC pays the cost of sending a representative to the Canadian Conference. This is an annual meeting of locals where we are brought up to speed on what is happening in locals across the country and submit resolutions for the Canadian Conference to consider. The following resolutions were submitted this year by OCSM: for a meeting to be set up between Orchestras Canada, the AFM and OCSM to discuss the Revenue Canada/TBSO situation which was very productive, occurring during the OCSM conference; urging AFM NY to send a memo to all the US orchestras pertaining to policies and procedures regarding access to auditions for all AFM members; and devising a way to announce orchestra openings other than solely through belonging to Orchestras Canada.

OCSM/OMOSC sends an extra delegate to the biannual AFM Convention where we observe, address in committee and on the Convention floor recommendations and resolutions submitted to the Convention for bylaw changes. It is no stretch to say that the Player Conferences, comprised of OCSM, ROPA, ICSOM, the RMA and the TMA, are leading the reform movement within the Federation. OCSM also bears the cost of attending other industry-related seminars and negotiations such as the CBC negotiations, the MAI forum, Department of Canadian Heritage hearings and Orchestra Canada meetings.

OCSM of course sends a representative to the ICSOM and ROPA conferences as well as an annual meeting with the International Executive Board. We also have a representative on the Orchestra Canada board and a trustee for the AFM Strike Fund. The Strike Fund saw a lot of improvements to make it more inclusive and equitable which was due in large part to a great deal of work by SSD Canada and OCSM. We also assist orchestras in crisis through letter-writing and media campaigns.

At this point you are probably wondering how we have time to play our jobs! Needless to say it is a challenge but one which we feel is wells worth the extra time and effort. It is safe to say that an executive position could easily be a full-time job.

So what are some of the less tangible things that OCSM/OMOSC does for its members? I believe that OCSM/OMOSC is all about advocacy. We are the communication hub whereby we facilitate communication with SSD, the AFM, Orchestras Canada, the Canada Council and various levels of government and NGOs. Your executive is in weekly if not daily contact, primarily through e-mail with the odd conference call and mid-winter meeting thrown in. The Player Conferences lobbied to get the SSD and must continue to lobby for increased service which increased Federation symphonic dues will hopefully provide. OCSM/OMOSC monitors the Ahot spots@ in conjunction with the SSD.

However we do not live in ivory towers. Choices that we make or do not make have an effect somewhere else. Therefore it is important to recognize our responsibility to ourselves, to our individual orchestras, to our collective symphonic body and indeed to musicians in other areas other than symphonic. Let=s get beyond me and move on to WE!

Rob McCosh – OCSM President

The Toronto Symphony strike is into its sixth week as we prepare this issue of UV. They have received much good press and support from across Canada and the U.S. Michael Enright of CBC Radio One >This Morning= read portions of the following email one Sunday in October.

Dear Michael:

It was nice of you to drop by the Toronto Symphony Musicians' picket line in front of Roy Thomson Hall a week ago. It seems you made a strategic choice -- stay and listen to the TSO Musicians' Jukka-Polkka Band or go off to your dentist and have your teeth drilled without a pain prophylactic.

Well, too bad. You missed the cultural event of Toronto's fall art season! The Jukka-Polkka band (spelled j-u-k-k-a hyphen p-o-l-k-k-a), named after the music director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Jukka-Pekka (spelled j-u-k-k-a hyphen p-e-k-k-a) Saraste, performed our debut concert on the corner of King and Simcoe. Your reporter, Mary Wiens, was on the spot, and curiously enough, at no point did I notice her grabbing her jaw in pain like she had a toothache. She was grinning all the time, so I do wonder if she has a hearing problem.

It is tough getting used to being on strike. It is the most difficult thing that any of us as professionals have ever had to do in our career, but the advantage to our strike is that we are withdrawing our musical services from the Toronto Symphony Board and Management, not from our adoring musical public. We have received great support from our audience, the press and the people of Toronto. We needed to do something meaningful for them.

So we played polkkas for our fans.

Naturally the venue is different -- wide open spaces instead of the confines of Roy Thomson Hall - and I must say the acoustics in front of the marquee are not bad. But who would have thought that a strike would lead me to my alternative calling as a polkka (spelled p-o-l-k-k-a) artiste? I should have known; my first instrument, strapped on my chest in grade 6, was an accordion. Polkka is in my blood.

But now for the big news! The members of the Jukka-Polkka Band have our first non-strike gig! We are the entertainment at a private function at the Granite Brewery for the Ompimian Society, a wine tasting group. But we are doing a beer-tasting for this wine group with Toronto beer guru and author Stephen Beaumont. Beer, pork hocks and polkkas.

Hey, it'll be my first square meal in the three weeks since the strike began.

Why don't you get a mouth full of novocaine and drop by for a pint? There is no way you are getting any of my pork hocks, though. I'm starved.

sincerely, David Bourque
Bass-clarinetist - Toronto Symphony Orchestra

We will report the success story of the Toronto Symphony in the next UNA VOCE, meanwhile, here=s one to whet your appetite.

ESO: A SUCCESS STORY

The Musicians of the Edmonton Symphony had great expectations at the beginning of this past round of negotiations. As Chair of the Players' Association, I took an active interest in the negotiations long before they started. Liz Koch (principal flute) and I spent many hours combing through financial statements. Even at a glance, anyone could see that the Edmonton Symphony Society/Winspear Centre for Music was enjoying robust fiscal health. This was due in large part to the fabulous spike in ticket sales which come with opening a new concert hall. NAC players, as well as The Toronto Symphony's Concert-Master Jacques Israelievitch, have recently enjoyed our exceptional acoustics. After 3 years in the new hall, ticket sales have not taken the expected plunge and tickets are actually hard to come by. Of course, we attribute this to the fact that no one had ever heard this orchestra properly in the old Jubilee Auditorium, and finally we could hear what talent resides in the ESO.

After closer scrutiny of the "books" Liz and I found that, although the bottom line looked great, there were significant drops in board and development fundraising. Ticket sales and the Arts Stabilization Program that we have been participating in for the past 5 years have counter-balanced this disturbing trend. Under the ASP, the Society has had to balance its books for the past several years. We feel that it was done to our detriment, since our season and salaries haven't grown in years. Yet, the symphony's budget has bassooned, oops I mean ballooned. Also, a caveat should have been placed on the board and administration. Instead of holding the line on our salaries, they should have matched the ASP grant with an equal amount of fund-raising in the community.

Although we were prepared to start negotiations in January, the Society wasn't ready until May. We received a document pledge to the "Musician Artists of the ESO" which was full of nice sentiments, followed by an incredibly parsimonious first offer. It actually included a cut when you untangled how they wanted the fiscal year-end to correspond with the end of the season. In accounting terms it's called a "stub" year. The net effect was that we were even more determined to get our share of the health. It also reinforced our position that, although the Calgary Philharmonic has a budget the same as ours - \$6.9m - they pay roughly \$925,000 more to musicians. We have no deficit, just over \$1m in our endowment, and have heard countless times that our financial situation is enviable.

In August we played 2 weeks of our summer festival which belonged to last year's season. We had a week to recover, during which negotiations began in earnest. We met with the musicians to inform them of the snail-like progress with the Society and felt it was imperative to pull out all the stops and prepare as if we were going to strike. Although organizing the orchestra for a strike was not something I relished, it was wonderful to see talents and abilities emerge that don't necessarily have anything to do with playing an instrument. We had prepared picket-signs, leaflets and made plans for an alternate concert. Our agreement expired on Sept.

7, and since we had no suitable offer from the Society, we elected to withhold services on our first scheduled day back, which was Sept. 15. The Society claimed that they couldn't examine or approve our terms, since key people were unavailable. We simply replied that our "key" people, in other words the musicians, were not available to play under any other terms. By not playing the first service and a half of the season they realized that we were serious and got them to agree to a "play and talk" deal at 110% of our old fees, and that if we ultimately settled for less than a 10% increase, we would pro-rate this when we finally came to an agreement. The Society could not lose and finally recognized that this was a sane and satisfactory way to save the opening of the season. The inimitable Eddy Bayens, our chief negotiator, reassured them that it would be ridiculous to refund \$100,000 worth of tickets when we were a mere \$12,000 apart. Our negotiating team elegantly referred to this as the "BS" or "Bayens Solution".

Our "BS" was good until October 8 and, coincidentally, the Chairman of the Symphony Board was scheduled to sing as a member of the choir for that concert. Three suspense-filled weeks quickly passed with rehearsals, concerts, negotiations and more strike preparation. On October 7, the Negotiating Committee had an offer that was more palatable; a 9% increase in per-service fee, and 13 more services adding up to a total increase of 14.2%. The item I thought was going to snag the deal was an erosion of our drug plan from 100% coverage to only 80%. This may sound strange, but it was a sore point for us since the Society changed the insurance policy to another company without consulting us. They did this to avoid a large fee increase this year but got no guarantees from the new company past the first year. The orchestra accepted this one-year deal which enables the Society to have a season without interruption. (Our new CEO, John Sterne didn't demand the 1% back from the first three weeks of the season.)

We are entering into mediation to negotiate some other outstanding issues and hope to conclude that process by December 5. In January we start all over again. We are half-way to where we want to be, which is at least parity with Calgary. The musicians are the engine which drives the organization and if we don't feel we are worthy of a decent living, it only results in an organization that is treading water instead of looking ahead to a better future. I applaud Eddy Bayens, Elizabeth Koch, Andrew Bacon, Hugh Davies and all of my colleagues for believing in a better future. I think now that our management has new courage to go forward. We are still preparing as if we may have a repeat of this next fall. We are creating an ESO Players' Web-site, modelled after the Toronto Symphony's Players'. Our hearts in Edmonton go out to all of the musicians of the Toronto Symphony. We looked over that precipice and didn't have to jump, although we had made that very hard decision. I hope by the time this reaches the OCSM membership that the Toronto Symphony is back to work and has reached a fair deal.

Eddie Stacey, chair ESO players association

REPORT ON BUSINESS

The following Resolutions were passed at the 1999 OCSM/OMOSC Conference in Ottawa. They are reproduced here without the whereases that preceded.

#1 RESOLVED, That OCSM/OMOSC appoint the firm of Grant Thornton, Winnipeg, as Auditor for the 1999-2000 year of operations.

#2 RESOLVED, That the budget item of Directory Printing be referred to the Executive Officers with power to enact.

#3 RESOLVED, That the President shall receive an honorarium of \$2,000 for the 1999-2000 year of operations.

#4 RESOLVED, That the design, construction and implementation of a bilingual Internet Web Site be undertaken by the OCSM/OMOSC Executive Officers.

#5 RESOLVED: that the Executive consider the advisability of assignment of Provincial Status of the Artist legislation to the appropriate committee for study and recommendation.

#6 RESOLVED, That OCSM/OMOSC urge the Canadian Conference to explore the possibility of the scheduled dovetailing of dates between the Canadian Conference and the OCSM/OMOSC Conference after the 2001 AFM Convention. OCSM/OMOSC shall encourage the sharing of mutual concerns at varied sessions of bilateral meetings of these two Conferences.

Our community lost two fine musicians in October. The gains at the ESO bargaining table were tempered by the passing of a long-time member of the orchestra, and musicians everywhere were shocked by the death of Georg Tintner. They are remembered here by Edie Stacey and Shimon Walt.

Monty (Marj) Montjoy **May 16, 1948 -- Oct. 23, 1999**

Monty Montjoy joined the bass section of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra in 1969 and retired in 1993 when she felt her multiple sclerosis was interfering with her contribution to the orchestra. Monty grew up in Chauvin, AB. She began studying the piano at the age of four, then at the University of Alberta something drew her to the double-bass. She studied with George Woodall, and in the summers with Tom Monohan of Toronto and Alan Molitz of Ottawa.

Monty was active as Chair of the Edmonton Symphony Players' Association, a former delegate to OCSM, and a loyal unionist who always strove for the betterment of pay and working conditions for her colleagues. She had a

bumper sticker on the back of her motor-scooter that read:
"Unless you're the lead dog, the view never changes."

Monty had eclectic taste in prose and poetry and would often be seen reading the very ribald poems of the American poet Charles Bukowski. She was a home-brewer who gave me my first home-brewer's manual. Monty had a genuine interest in the lives of her colleagues and especially in their children. She would never forget a birthday and would often fashion beautiful hand-made gifts for them. After she was diagnosed with MS, her energies became even more focused on helping others by volunteering on the pediatrics ward of the University Hospital.

Although Monty never set foot on the Winspear stage her sound and presence still reverberate through the orchestra. Her final services in the orchestra were for Grzegorz Nowak conducting audition with the ESO. In January 1994, Monty played until the dress-rehearsal and was disappointed that she didn't have the strength left to play the concert. We often look at soloists and conductors and think that they make an orchestra magnificent, forgetting that the backbone of an orchestra lies with the people like Monty who, year in and year out, devote their lives to playing exquisitely - everything from a Saturday for Kids to a Mahler Symphony.

Edith Stacey - Chair, ESPA

Mr. T.

On October 3, 1999, Nova Scotia and the whole world woke up to the terrible news that Georg Tintner, Mister T. to us at Symphony Nova Scotia, had died the previous night in Halifax. The news came as a shock to most, since only a few of his closest friends were aware of the deadly disease he was fighting for the last six years. The details of his life and death along with opinions for and against the way he chose to finish his life became a hot topic of discussion everywhere. I wish to get away from all of that and to share some of my memories of Mr. T. as a colleague, musician and a friend.

Georg Tintner's first rehearsal with SNS will always be remembered by the musicians. Although many of my colleagues had in their younger days performed under Mr. T. with the National Youth Orchestra, the anticipation was great. He walked into Room 121 of the Dalhousie Arts Centre, walked onto the podium and asked us to turn to the most difficult spot in the hardest piece on the program. The first sounds were not very complimentary, but after about a half an hour of work, things started falling into place. Then Mr. T. spoke. "Now that you have conquered the most difficult part of this concert, everything else will be easy. So relax and enjoy..." The concert was great.

It was love at first sight, he loved us and we loved him. There was never the feeling of grandeur projecting from the podium, an unwelcome trend among many conductors. He was always supportive, although not easy with compliments. To get a complimentary remark from Mr. T. was a true achievement. Asking for his comments, especially if you were a singer, was like taking your life in your own hands. He would say, "Now that you've asked...." What you heard was

his honest truth; at times not very complimentary, but never abusive.

Georg Tintner loved the community. His work with local professional and amateur choirs was a pure labour of love. Comments like, "This needs the utmost of feelings" will always be remembered. His remark to orchestra members complaining about a certain amateur conductor's lack of experience was "And where do you think he/she is supposed to get his/her experience, in the New York Philharmonic?" He insisted that all musicians, regardless of their professional status, be treated with respect and care. He believed that the job of a professional musician was to perform always at one's best under any circumstance.

The world has lost a great artist, but we Nova Scotians inherited the most recent memories of this wonderful, compassionate and inspirational human being and a legacy that will never be forgotten.

So, rest in piece Mr. T. and thanks again for your gift to us all.

Shimon Walt, OCSM delegate Symphony Nova Scotia

The following people attended the 1999 Conference, either as delegates or alternates:

Calgary Philharmonic - Mark Johnson
 Canadian Opera Company Orchestra - Elaine Thompson
 Edmonton Symphony - Edith Stacey
 Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony - Tony Christie
 National Arts Centre Orch. - Francine Schutzman
 National Ballet Orchestra - Max Christie
 New Hamilton Orchestra - Ken MacDonald
 Orchestra London Canada - Jack Winn
 Orchestre symphonique de Montréal - Jean-Marc Leclerc
 Orchestre symphonique de Québec - Lance Nagels
 Regina Symphony - Gary Borton
 Saskatoon Symphony - Linda Bardutz
 Symphony Nova Scotia - Christopher Palmer
 Thunder Bay Symphony - Jeff Gibson
 Toronto Symphony - Susan Lipchak
 Vancouver Symphony - Elizabeth Volpe
 Victoria Symphony - Robert Fraser
 Windsor Symphony - Peter Voisey
 Winnipeg Symphony - Mary Osoko

OCSM/OMOSC Officers 1999 – 2000

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