



# UNA VOCE

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OCMSM (the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians) is the voice of Canadian professional orchestral musicians. OCMSM'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.

## From the Editor

by Barbara Hankins

### Staying Connected

This issue of *Una Voce* is all about connections, on many levels:

- among countries: Francine Schutzman shares her report to the International Federation of Musicians' conference in Amsterdam;
- among Canadian and American orchestras: Matt Heller explains the recent "wristband" campaign for the Detroit Symphony;
- among OCMSM orchestras: Merrie Klazek updates us on recent events in Thunder Bay;
- among musicians using the World Wide Web: Matt Heller lists a few do's and don'ts for social networking;
- among musicians in your orchestra: Eline Brock Sennheim gives suggestions for a healthy and happy Players' Association;
- among unions: Bob Fraser explains how you could win a trip to the Labor Notes conference in 2012.

Being somewhat the old-fashioned kind of communicator, I relish the opportunity for the kind of connections we find at the annual OCMSM conference. Face-to-face contact adds elements of interaction that the internet or even the phone cannot achieve. In-depth understanding of orchestral musicians' concerns across Canada occurs when we can listen and ask questions at the conference table and over a beer in the hospitality suite. OCMSM members are encouraged to talk to their delegates about issues that are important to them, and send their delegates off to the conference with the directive to find out how other orchestras handle similar situations. A conference is a place to share solutions, garner sympathy, cheer on successes, and support those in difficulty. See you in Vancouver!

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The 2011 OCMSM Conference will be held August 10–14 at the Sandman Hotel, Vancouver City Centre, 180 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, B.C. All sessions are open to auditors, except for Wednesday, August 10. For more details of the conference schedule, contact your delegate in July.

## The President's Report for the FIM Conference

by Francine Schutzman

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As I write this, I have just returned from the Second International Symphonic Conference, held in Amsterdam in early March and organized by the Fédération Internationale des Musiciens. I was pleased to be invited to represent OCMSM by the AFM, and in fact I was the only delegate from Canada. The panel in which I took part was entitled Support for Musicians: Social, Psychological, and Financial. I have included an excerpt from my opening remarks. I hope that I will be forgiven for writing about my own situation; I used it as a jumping-off point for what I wanted to say.

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Social support can be demonstrated by the clauses in an orchestra's collective agreement. The sling on my arm is not a prop for this talk. I am recovering from shoulder surgery, and I was able to make this trip because I have paid sick leave from my orchestra, cumulative from year to year. If necessary, I could be off work for a year. Of the twenty full-time orchestras in Canada that belong to the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians, or OCMSM, some guarantee only ten services of sick leave, and eleven do not have cumulative sick leave. If it had not happened that I needed surgery, I would have asked my orchestra for paid personal leave, which has been granted to me in the past so that I could attend union activities. We have four paid services a year for personal reasons; of the other OCMSM orchestras, half have no paid personal leave, while the others have allowances ranging from three to fourteen days. Had I not been lucky enough to have adequate sick leave, I might be tempted to return to work too early and risk re-injury. Nobody should have to make that decision. Personally, I would love to see benefits such as these standardized across the country. Furthermore, although my operation was paid for by Canada's health plan, I spent thousands of dollars on various treatments over the past two years so that I could keep playing. Again, I was lucky because some of that money

was reimbursed because the members of my orchestra belong to a supplemental health insurance plan. Half of the OCSM orchestras have no such plan. In the United States, health-care insurance premiums are often used as bargaining chips during contract negotiations, and they're the first "perk" to fall by the wayside when money is tight. One should not have to trade away one's health in order to settle a contract.

Psychological support has been offered by several OCSM orchestra managements to the musicians. I know of two orchestras that experienced a great deal of divisiveness over either the actions or the dismissal of a music director. In each case, counselling sessions were offered to musicians to help them deal with the emotional fallout of these situations. The National Arts Centre Orchestra musicians were also offered counselling after an unsettling incident in which a disturbed audience member tried to jump onto the stage from a box in order to save Papageno during a performance of *The Magic Flute*. The Calgary Philharmonic had a resident psychologist for a time. He proved to be a meaningful and helpful resource for many of the musicians. He is a CPO board member and has a strong interest in the personal and psychological dynamics of orchestra musicians, and so he offered to consult with any musician free of charge to talk about issues either related to the orchestra or not.

Psychological support also comes from the local branches of our union. For example, Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, in New York City, has created a Musicians' Assistance Program that offers counselling – both one-on-one and in groups – as well as information on all kinds of social services, including health insurance, food stamps, and more. All services are free to Local 802 members. In Canada, Performing Arts Lodges have been created in six cities. These provide reduced-rent housing for artists of various disciplines as well as music, along with support ranging from providing drivers for medical appointments to providing rehearsal spaces.

Adequate financial support is a problem for many orchestras in the U.S. and Canada. We don't have a long tradition of treating classical musicians as honoured members of society unless they are quite famous. Classical music is often seen as being meant for the elite, and there is not a widespread understanding that performing music is what we do as a profession and that we are worthy of salaries that reflect the amount of training necessary to be a symphonic musician. The standing joke is that we are often thought to be musicians in our spare time because we love it, but that we must have a "real" job in order to make living. In an effort to combat this attitude, every North American orchestra has implemented plans for reaching out to new audiences, both adults and children, in an effort to show them that our concerts can be thrilling and fun as well as beautiful. Quite apart from the fact that people's lives can be



by Kenji Fuse, Victoria Symphony

enhanced by our music, it is our hope that with familiarity will come an appreciation of our worth.

Even some orchestras at the top of the financial ladder have been suffering great financial losses because of the recent recession, whether from lower returns on investments for their endowment funds or from fewer tickets being sold. For the orchestras with lower budgets, the problems are exacerbated, and Canadian orchestras especially are not known for paying a decent living wage. Only three of the twenty member orchestras of the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians pay a yearly salary that is even slightly higher than the median income for a family of four in that orchestra's province. Most of the OCSM orchestras pay salaries that are only 40 or 50 per cent of the median family income. Victoria, British Columbia, is a rather expensive city in which to live. I once asked a musician in the Victoria Symphony how she and her colleagues managed to exist on such small salaries. She replied, "Oh, it's not too bad, but you try to marry someone with a job outside the orchestra, and you have to think twice about getting your teeth fixed or having children." Again, I would love to see standardized compensation across the country, with adjustments for the local cost of living.

Despite all this, we have come a long way in the past fifty years in terms of getting our musicians paid the salaries they deserve, but there are some instances in which musicians have needed extra help in emergency situations. One of the oldest orchestras in the U.S., the Honolulu Symphony, recently declared bankruptcy after

110 years of existence. Last year, the board of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, or ICSOM, issued a Call to Action to help the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony after they had not been paid for many weeks. The result was that \$115,000 was sent to those musicians by members of ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA, which is the Regional Orchestras Players' Association in the U.S.. As a clarinetist in the Honolulu Symphony put it, the amount of moral and financial support received during that crisis made a big difference in keeping hope alive. In other Calls to Action, \$100,000 was raised for the Jacksonville (Florida) Symphony, and \$130,000 for the Columbus (Ohio) Symphony.

As I write this, the musicians of the Detroit Symphony, long one of the top ten U.S. orchestras in terms of prestige and salary, have been on strike for 20 long weeks, and the rest of their season has just been postponed. At issue is not just the proposed pay cuts, but the very nature of a symphonic musician's job, including tenure, peer review, and paying new musicians a full salary. ICSOM issued another Call to Action last October, and an unprecedented \$280,000 has been raised to date. Symphonic colleagues all across North America have written letters of support and signed petitions to try to help the Detroit musicians. This is the very best example of musicians helping musicians – socially, psychologically, and financially.

## Attention All Troublemakers!

by Bob Fraser,

OCSM Secretary and sometime troublemaker

OK, I could have said something like "attention all orchestra labour activists" or "attention all lefties" but somehow I like the ring of the word "troublemaker." Are you a troublemaker? Are you on your orchestra negotiating committee, orchestra committee, or union board?

Perhaps you come from a strong union family, are active in neighbourhood or community politics, or just the kind of person who fights for the "little guy." If so, read on.

Most of you in the orchestral community will remember the late Lew Waldeck (1935–2004). For those who don't, Lew was the first head of the AFM Symphony Department. He took this post in 1983, and in the decades that followed, he inspired orchestral musician leadership throughout the continent with his famous "dog and pony show" seminars on union organizing. A more detailed biography of Lew can be found here: <http://www.livemusicawareness.com/lewwaldeck.htm>.

Following Lew's passing, the Lew Waldeck Fund was established to carry on his legacy. The mission of the Fund can be found at <http://www.livemusicawareness.com/lewwaldeckfund.htm>. The trustees of the Fund

have decided that one use of the Fund will be to send one rank-and-file musician from a Player Conference Orchestra to the next Labor Notes Conference in 2012 (location to be determined; the 2010 Conference was in Detroit, MI). Labor Notes (whose motto, by the way is "putting the movement back in the labor movement") is a media and organizing project that is aimed specifically at rank-and-file union members. You can learn all you need to know about them, including their biennial Labor Notes Conference, at <http://www.labornotes.org>.

By luck of the draw, OCSM will be the first Player Conference to send a rank-and-file orchestral musician to the next Labor Notes Conference. This is where you come in. We would like each orchestra to recommend one musician from within its ranks to be considered to attend the Labor Notes Conference. When we have a nominee from each orchestra, the OCSM Executive will choose the attendee by random draw. The attendee will have all expenses paid to attend the Labor Notes Conference, courtesy of the Lew Waldeck Fund.

We are looking for someone with real leadership skills; not just a good committee person, but someone who perhaps has a future in the labour movement as a teacher, organizer, activist, negotiator, coalition builder, ombudsman; in short, a troublemaker! We would suggest that you make this an agenda item on your next musicians' meeting – identifying a potential attendee to this conference. Once you have chosen someone, have your OCSM delegate bring that person's name to the conference, where the names from each orchestra will be put into a hat for a draw. The winner will be contacted immediately and a notice posted on the OCSM list. The winner will be requested to write a short report on the Labor Notes Conference for an OCSM newsletter.

## Detroit Wristbands Send a Message of Support

by Matt Heller



OCSM encourages all member orchestras to show your support for the musicians of the Detroit Symphony with Save Our Symphony Solidarity wristbands. These blue wristbands are a reminder to all that the stage of The Max in Detroit is still dark after more than 20 weeks of a labour dispute. They also communicate to the public that orchestra musicians across North America stand together to support one another.

Solidarity wristbands have already been worn by the

symphony orchestras of Chicago, Florida, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oregon, San Francisco, and Cleveland. San Francisco Symphony flutist Cathy Payne writes, "We crafted a joint statement from the entire SFS family – musicians, board, and administration – that has been inserted in our program books, thanking our audiences for their support, confirming the importance of symphonic music in our communities, directing our patrons to the DSO musicians and Save our Symphony websites, and urging them to send letters of support encouraging all parties to find a resolution that gets the DSO back on The Max stage."

Similar actions are already planned in Calgary and Vancouver. To obtain Solidarity wristbands for your orchestra (\$20 for 10 wristbands), please visit the Save Our Symphony website: <<http://saveoursymphony.info/solidarity-wristband/>>.

Thank you for your support!

## Into a New Era for the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra

by Merrie Klazek

Principal Trumpet, TBSO

They say that change is the only constant. This certainly holds true in the world of orchestras where a continually evolving economic climate and annual turnover among musicians and management positions inevitably needs to translate into the welcoming of new sounds and ideas.

Sometimes many changes happen at once and an organization moves into a new era. This is the case presently for the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, where a relatively short transition period is coming to a close and the pieces of the puzzle are settling into place – auspiciously, in our 50th anniversary season. At this exciting time of new music director, new general manager, new conductor-in-residence, and new marketing director, we send out a genuine and heartfelt thanks to the folks who have previously held these positions and who put their energy into sustaining the TBSO through the years, contributing immensely to the cultural offering our orchestra gives to this community.

Change can bring with it a certain amount of apprehension. However in the twelve years that I've been a part of this orchestra and this community, I have witnessed a consistent and remarkable tenacity and overall positive vision that seems to be a trademark of Thunder Bay. We are no exception to the serious challenges facing all Canadian orchestras right now, but new ideas and fresh insights are on the horizon, and together we are moving into the future, one step at a time.

After a music director search of basically one season,

we welcomed Arthur Post to the helm. Arthur brings with him a rich and varied musical background along with a vision for continued excellence and creative innovative programming. We are enjoying the work we've been doing with Arthur this season, and the level at which he has committed himself to the community despite his busy schedule. Recently appointed General Manager Christopher Wilkinson will come to us full-time in May from Symphony Nova Scotia, where he has been principal second violin. The experience of working in the orchestra is an asset to this position and we look forward to having Chris on board. Emily Carr joined our office staff this Winter as marketing director – no relation to the artist, but artistic and creative none the less! Hot off the press is the announcement of our new conductor-in-residence for 2011–12, Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser from Calgary. Daniel's energy, passion, and experience in education programming make him a welcome addition to the team.

The buzz around new appointments, however, is short lived unless there is a decided commitment among musicians to get on board and promote their orchestra in the community. This is where I have to say hats off to my colleagues who, in addition to performance excellence, are dedicated to being ambassadors for the TBSO in our daily interactions around town. We, the musicians, are the face of the orchestra, and the influence we can have is far reaching and effective with just a simple question to the checkout person, hairdresser or taxi driver – "Have you been to see the symphony yet this year?" Cheers to the future.

## Social Networking Do's and Don'ts

by Matt Heller

Social networking seems made for musicians: we have far-flung friends and colleagues, we have concerts and events to promote, and we're always looking for a great mash-up of Pierrot Lunaire and the Teletubbies. Oh wait, maybe that's just me.

In any case, millions of people use Facebook every day, creating exponential possibilities for connection and embarrassment. When I asked OCSM Webmaster Ken MacDonald how to network safely, he said, "I'd offer a reminder that you can set up several levels of access. People with whom you are closely connected can get more information, and people you don't know so well can get a more minimal view of your activities." This seems like great advice, especially for those of us with stalkers.

I haven't rejigged my Facebook settings yet, but I did compile this handy list of common sense do's and don'ts, some of which I learned the hard way:

- DO tell about concerts and events that you are excited about.

- DON'T use it as a forum to rant or complain.
- DO link to positive reviews and articles of interest.
- DON'T write anything you wouldn't say publicly.
- DO promote causes and issues you believe in.
- DON'T post anything which might be offensive or inflammatory.
- DO offer compliments to colleagues and other performers.
- DON'T post potentially embarrassing photos of yourself or others.
- DO ask friends discreetly to remove anything that seems inappropriate.
- DON'T just post the first thing that pops into your head.
- DO keep your posts brief.
- DON'T assume everyone understands buzzwords and abbreviations (though all your friends should know OCSM, IMHO.)
- DO give yourself a one-hour waiting period (or ask a friend) before posting anything you're unsure about, and proofread for grammar and clarity.
- DON'T drunk book (via Urban Dictionary: When you Facebook while intoxicated and then don't remember what you wrote on Facebook.)

## Apathy Is Boring

Eline Brock Sanheim  
Quebec Symphony

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**Ap'a-thy** n. Lack of feeling, lack of concern (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

Lack of interest or concern, especially regarding matters of general importance or appeal; indifference (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

Similar words include inertia, insensibility, unfeelingness, indifference, unconcern, and sluggishness.

Some of you already know what I'm going to say in this article. Some of you couldn't care less. Some of you will not even see this article because you will have put your copy of *Una Voce* in the recycling bin the first opportunity you get. And some of you will be so apathetic that it will just sit on your stand until it falls to the floor of the stage and your "favourite" IATSE person will complain about having to pick up after you.

The fact is, everyone is comfortable with different levels of implication. The problem is, comfort is not the issue.

At the 2003 OCSM Conference in Regina, Janice

Galassi (AFM Symphonic Services Division, New York) brought up an interesting observation about orchestras. In any given orchestra, there are five to six people who never involve themselves in anything. Ever. There are five to six people at any given time who are involved in everything. Always. And the rest of the group just floats along in the middle, content to just be.

I found this statement very interesting for two reasons: one, because I could identify with it in my own orchestra; and two, because all of the nodding heads around the conference table told me that all of the other delegates identified with it too.

Let's examine these groups, one by one. The five or six people who never do anything are not necessarily those who are apathetic. On the contrary, most of these people are actively refusing to participate, for whatever personal reasons they have. That is a conscious choice. That is not apathy.

The five or six people who are doing everything are certainly not apathetic. Crazy, maybe, but not apathetic. Of the remaining 33 to 35 people, we can figure that up to five people, for reasons of family obligation or illness or injury, haven't the time to spare. This is completely legitimate.

That leaves between 28 and 30 people who are truly apathetic.

The problem with apathy is that it leaves a huge, unusable resource in its wake: you. It also burns out the five or six people in your orchestra who are left to do all of the work by themselves.

"So what?" you may ask. "*I really don't know anything about committee work. And I don't like dealing with \_\_\_\_\_.*" (Insert one or more of the following words which appropriately finishes this sentence for you: lawyers, businesspeople, unionism, budgets, contracts, conflict.) Interestingly, my guess is that most people who get involved in their organizations (whether the Players' Committee or the Board of Directors) aren't crazy about most of these topics either, but they get involved because they see a need. Some of them may grow to like it, but lots don't; they just suck it up and do it anyway.

*"I got into the music business for the music, not the business."*

Didn't we all? If we didn't, we'd be in management! But ask any businessperson you know, and they'll tell you the same thing: you have to take care of the business part of your business, or you will be out of business. I don't care if you sell cars, widgets, or music, the principle still applies. I know, I know, you are all saying, *"But that's not my job."* It may not be what you're paid for, but if you don't pay attention to who's doing what on the business side of your organization, you may be out of a job.

Here's the reality of today's symphony business in Canada: we're in trouble. Governments have adopted a "zero-deficit" policy for everything. That includes the arts. We are seen by many politicians and funders as an

outdated, outmoded, useless frill which society can no longer afford.

I don't want to scare you, but many of you have experienced this reality already, so I'm not telling you something you don't already know. If you don't believe me, ask your colleagues in most Canadian orchestras about their recent experiences. They are still working because of the sacrifices, both of money and time, made by their players.

When a crisis hits, nobody can afford to be apathetic. Each one of us is going to have to make the conscious decision to become more involved in our respective orchestras. This does not have to be a big and scary investment of time; the more people who implicate themselves, the more the work can be spread out and shared. Not everyone feels able to be a member of the Players' Committee, or sit on the Board of the Orchestra. That's okay. Here are some examples of small things that you can do to lend a hand:

1. Go to your Players' Committee and ask them if there is anything you can do to help them. They may hug you and put you to work immediately. They may say no. They may look at you in stunned silence (they may be in shock). But they will remember you when they next feel overwhelmed with the hundreds of things they have to do every week, and take you up on your offer. Be sure to let them know if you have any special skills, e.g., typing with more than two fingers, computer skills, bilingualism, communications, business or non-musical ("civilian") contacts, the ability to balance your chequebook to the penny, and so on.
2. When your Players' Committee asks your help to do something, accept graciously if you can. One of the most frustrating things a Committee member goes through is asking for volunteers to help out with a sub-committee, the organization of an event, or some other task, and being told, "Uh, sorry." Or, "Uh, I'm sorry, but, uh, I can't because, uh, my, uh, cat is, uh, getting spayed that day. Yeah. Sorry."
3. When you're asked (and you will be asked!) to sign a letter or petition in support of the arts in Canada, do it and do it promptly. Please don't make us hunt you down.
4. The simple act of a kind word spoken to a committee member is also very helpful. When I was President of our Players' Committee there were two or three people in my orchestra who were unable to participate actively when asked. But their unsolicited and often unexpected words of thanks and appreciation at different times energized me, and were worth more to me than the extra pair of hands. Thanks to them. (I bet they weren't even aware they were so helpful.)
5. "Be the change you want to see." (Gandhi)

When I was on-line looking up the exact definition of "apathy," I came across the "Word of the Day" from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary people. That word was "swivet" – a noun meaning "*a state of extreme agitation*."

Ironically, that's the antithesis of apathy. It seemed almost prophetic. So here's what I'd love to see: every musician in the country in a *swivet* about the importance of arts and culture in Canada, and willing to get their hands dirty to make all Canadians believe in it too, especially the politicians and the folks with the money.

Oh, and by the way, I borrowed the title for this article. Not because I'm apathetic, but because I thought it was very clever. Apathy Is Boring is a group that seeks to use art and technology to educate youth about democracy ([www.apathyisboring.com](http://www.apathyisboring.com)). Their national director, Ilona Dougherty, is a choreographer and the founder of Action Through Art and is anything but apathetic! ([www.actionthroughart.com](http://www.actionthroughart.com))

## UNA VOCE

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