

Senza Sord

JUNE 2017

BRAVO!

ICSOM CHAIRPERSON
MEREDITH SNOW
**PIT AGAINST
THE MONEY**

CHRIS TURPIN
**IT'S ALL ABOUT
THE MUSIC**

BOW CAMPBELL
DIRECTOR, MUSICIANS MEAA



soma

A MEAA Member



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Cover: From Queensland Symphony Orchestra,
Kate Lawson – Principal Piccolo, Warwick Adeney –
Concertmaster, Richard Madden – Associate Principal
Trumpet, Irit Silver – Section Principal Clarinet.
With permission from QSO

Left: Alondra de la Parra/QSO



A MEAA Member

Overture

Tania Hardy Smith

Orchestra Victoria

Hi everyone

This issue of *Senza Sord* expands on retirement, by bringing to you the stories of three of our colleagues who have clocked up 120 years between them playing in our orchestras. The careers of Juris Ezergailis (ASO), Chris Turpin (MSO) and Rob Clarke (TSO) epitomise the life of many orchestral musicians who audition for a position, then in the blink of an eye, find they've been there for decades! Many of us are moving towards the same denouement... What is fantastic is that although evidently not a bed of roses all the time, there's a massive amount of enjoyment and challenge that comes with the job. Juris, Chris and Rob outline their experiences and some of the ups and downs, technical and physical aspects of being an orchestral musician for much of their life.

We also welcome Bow Campbell, the new Director, Musicians at MEAA. Many of you will have met Bow by now, as he seemingly hasn't stopped running round the country and the orchestras since taking over from Howard. But I think many of us could see that coming.... One of the things Bow is currently organising is the biennial SOMA Conference 2017, taking place in Melbourne on July 30-31. It's always a good opportunity for five players from each orchestra to gather together, catch up and discuss a broad range of contemporary orchestral issues.



During my final week here at the New York Philharmonic, I can't help reflect on some of my greatest accomplishments... buying drinks for the entire orchestra one night in Shanghai.

Matthew VanBesien

There are a few anniversaries to celebrate and to flag – MEAA recently turned 25 and the Opera Australia Orchestra (in its nascency, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust Sydney Orchestra) turns 50 this year. Happy birthday!

Orchestra Victoria (formerly the Elizabethan Theatre Trust Melbourne Orchestra) will also be celebrating its 50th birthday in 2019 – preparations are underway as alumni names are gathered to be contacted for information and historical material. If you have anything you would like to share for the anniversary, please contact please contact myself (taniah@australianballet.com.au) or Martin Reddington (martinr@australianballet.com.au).

And Matt Goddard, Mark Bruwel, Cameron Brook, Simon Collins and Bow Campbell have just returned from the 4th FIM International Orchestra Conference – read Matt's rundown of activities and agenda.

All the best to everyone and happy reading...

Tania

BRAVO

TO RETIRING MUSICIAN JURIS EZERGAILIS

This article was written by Michelle Robins,
Publications & Communications Coordinator, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

First published <http://www.aso.com.au> Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Upon his retirement from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, former viola section leader Juris Ezergailis was honoured by fellow ASO musicians and staff, in recognition of his 42-year tenure and deep imprint on the orchestra.

An informal celebration for Juris was held at the Adelaide Town Hall with ASO colleagues following the ASO's Master Series concert, Fantastic Symphony on Friday 9 December, complete with a special 'viola' cake and sparkling wine.

ASO violist Martin Butler was asked to say a few words on behalf of the viola section players and in his speech joked

about how the violas are "still a bit confused about one of the divisi passages in the Berlioz". [Explainer: A section principal has to field lots of questions from the string section they lead, and apparently a dodgy "C#" in the Messiaen should have been a "D".] These are the sort of questions that Juris has fielded over the past 40-odd years!

Martin remembered a time, many years ago (during his trial with the ASO), when he sat next to Juris on the front stand for the first time.

"The conductor had the temerity to insist on a change of bowing so that the violas would match the cellos," Martin recalled.



Juris Ezergalis performing with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

“I leaned over and reluctantly scribbled in a rather hasty and untidy down bow.

“During the next break in playing, Juris leaned in and erased my ‘scribble’. Then, with a long, drawn out breath he replaced it with his own extremely neat and perfect form of calligraphy.”

Martin talked of Juris’ professionalism and also teased about how Juris would take his parts home to practise, usually at least two months in advance, to draw the diminuendos and crescendi in the parts using a ruler.

“He’s even used masking tape in order to facilitate page turns where the music had become tattered!” laughed Martin.

“Seriously though, Juris’ approach to making the music perfectly legible, as well as coming to the first rehearsal in complete readiness, has not only provided us all with an important legacy but it also shows the degree of utmost professionalism and consummate preparedness in his approach to his work in general with the ASO.

“Indeed, he has always been a shining example of a colleague who sets the bar very high; a very difficult act to follow.”

“There are simply not enough superlatives to describe [Juris’] virtuosity, dedication and contributions to our orchestra,” said ASO Managing Director Vincent Ciccarello when Juris announced his plan to retire in 2016.

"In 2016, the ASO celebrated its 80th anniversary and for more than half that time, Juris Ezergailis has been an important and valuable member of the orchestra.

"It's with a mixture of sadness but also a sense of celebration that we say goodbye to Juris, who leaves after 42 years of dedicated and devoted service to the ASO," wrote Vincent.

... for someone who has always felt uncomfortable in crowds, this was certainly an 'interesting' choice of career.

"It is a remarkable achievement by any standard and in any field of endeavour. Juris is going to be sorely missed by his colleagues and our audiences alike. He's been a mainstay of ASO concert-giving over such a long time."

After four decades on a demanding practice and rehearsal schedule, Juris is looking forward to filling his time with chamber music, travel, family and friends.

Standing on the grand staircase of the Adelaide Town Hall in front of his ASO colleagues, Juris said for someone who has always felt uncomfortable in crowds, this was certainly an 'interesting' choice of career.

"I suppose for me being immersed in some of the greatest works of art human-kind has ever produced, day-in, day-out, was a pretty strong inducement to go beyond this weakness."

Juris declared his list of people to thank was very long.

"For the sake of brevity let me put it thus," he said. "An orchestra is a wonderful and complex organism where many people with a wide array of skills, whether they are musical skills, or negotiating and administrative skills, combine to make a unified living musical instrument that breathes life into great works of art.

"And the ASO has been my instrument – my voice – for the past 42 years," he said.

"As I say goodbye, I would like to thank you, one and all, for being part of my voice for all these years. You are all champions and I wish you and this wonderful organisation an exciting and robust future where you can continue to nourish the soul of our community for many years to come."

Adelaide-born, of Latvian parents, Juris Ezergailis was a student of Beryl Kimber and Lloyd Davies of the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide. He participated in Australian Youth Orchestra seasons across Australia and in its 1975 tour of Asia.

In 1976, Juris joined the viola section of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and shortly thereafter became the violist of the Adelaide String Quartet. He was one of the founding members of the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, appearing as principal violist and occasional soloist.



Juris Ezergallis and wife/fellow ASO musician Carolyn Mooz (viola) at the Adelaide Town Hall

In 1987 he became Principal Violist in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared as soloist on several occasions.

Never far away from chamber music, having grown up performing with two of his brothers in the Ezergallis String Trio, he regularly performs with the leading figures in Adelaide's music scene. Juris has an active interest performing new music and has premiered many new works both in the chamber and solo repertoire.

In 1990 and 1993 Juris travelled to Oslo to join the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra for tours to the Salzburg festival, Zurich, Japan and Hong Kong with their Chief Conductor, Mariss Jansons. In 1990 he performed with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra on several occasions under the directorship of Iona Brown.

In 1996 Juris took part in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's inaugural international tour of China and Asia.

POINT OF PRINCIPAL

TANIA AND JURIS CHAT ABOUT THE ROLE OF AN ORCHESTRAL VIOLA PRINCIPAL

THS: *Hi Juris*

The ASO blog was a great send-off from the orchestra where you've spent so much of your professional life. There was a small mention of aspects of the leadership required for the principal of a string section, but could you expand a little on what that entails and how you've approached the role in the years as principal of the viola section?

JE: Every player is expected to have prepared their part going into the first rehearsal. A principal player must be 120% prepared because they will be a major point of reference in negotiating the technical challenges that will be encountered in the music. Any solos in the music are for the

principals to play. Additionally, organising and coordinating bowings with other string sections and accommodating the conductor's requests are the responsibility of the principal. The conductor will ask for and suggest many things in rehearsal. The principal is expected to give any additional comments and suggestions the conductor might have overlooked that are instrument specific. For most of the 30 years as the section leader I drew up the section roster, which entailed countless hours in front of a computer screen. Aside from rehearsals section leaders are required to attend regular Section Leaders meetings.

THS: *What are the particularities of being a viola player and principal in the Adelaide*

Symphony Orchestra? And within the string section?

JE: Apart from being the brunt of all those 'viola jokes'? :) The inner parts (violas and 2nd violins) give the harmony in the music its identity; play an open fifth (top note first violin, bottom note cello) and it is neither major nor minor but then add the inner note and alas the chord has an identity. We are also part of the motor that helps to keep the outer parts rhythmic; try playing a waltz with just the 'um' and no 'cha cha' for example.

THS: *There must be some highs and lows from your extraordinary 42 years in the orchestra – can you tell us one or two stories?*

JE: From an early age Sibelius' music has somehow resonated with my spirit. The recording of his complete symphonies with Arvo Volmer and the ASO is one of my proud moments in that time. Running the ultra-marathon in the form of the Wagner's Ring Cycle firstly in 1998 with Jeffrey Tate and then again in 2004 with Asher Fisch is another. At the other end of the spectrum from time to time, the existence of our orchestras has come under threat. The idea of a soul-less society has been a major thumbs down for me in those times.

THS: *From someone who has spent so long in the orchestra, tell us about the relationship a symphony orchestra has with its city and state, in this case Adelaide and South Australia. What does a symphony orchestra bring to the community?*

JE: Our orchestra and, in fact, all the arts are an indispensable part of the soul and identity of our community. Music is sound organised in such a way that being in its presence somehow alters one. Then you have creative masters, past and present, who write down

these strange little dots, lines and squiggles that come alive when an orchestra interprets them. One is taken on such a journey, much like watching a movie or reading a book or viewing a painting or dance.

THS: *As an elder of the instrumental musician world, how have you managed to play for so long? Can you give us some insight into how one manages the aging process and playing the viola? Do you have a routine you've used for many years to keep playing at such a high level?*

JE: Preparation I think is key to managing the stress of a career in the performing arts. Knowing the music well enables one to have the self-confidence to go in front of your colleagues and audiences and perform at a high level. Additionally I think it is important to be constantly mindful, when playing, of posture and good technique and to keep going back to basics and re-examine how one plays. It is inevitable though that ones' muscles and joints will show signs of wear and tear with age in such a physically and mentally demanding profession.

THS: *It can be a strenuous career being a string player in a symphony orchestra and I think we're all heading towards a better understanding of the process of aging and performance. Do you have any thoughts on how we can better manage this process?*

JE: Staying fit and healthy generally is the key. Eating well, exercising, filling your lungs with plenty of fresh air out in the open, exercising your mind with stimulating books, watching thought provoking movies and documentaries all have a role.

THS: *Many of us have partners who play as well. Having your wife and fellow ASO musician in your section must be interesting! In a few words?*



Juris Ezergailis with the ASO viola section who performed in Fantastic Symphony at the Adelaide Town Hall.

JE: Having your best buddy in life there with you at work is the best of both worlds. We also speak the same language; imagine coming home after a strenuous day's rehearsals and talking to your electrician spouse about those pesky semiquaver passages, or ensemble issues between the crotchets here and the triplet quavers over there.

THS: *And finally, those violas that you and Carolyn play – please tell us about them. They look extraordinary!!*

JE: They are instruments based on the 'viola d'amore' made by master Japanese-American luthier Hiroshi Iizuka. Violas are in a unique situation because physics dictates

that they ought to be ungainly and large to best produce the sound in the tessitura it inhabits, probably something like a very small cello. Makers have been experimenting constantly to make an instrument that has maximum 'box' size but still be able to be played under the chin like a violin. Hiroshi has given his instruments a big 'bottom' where ones' chin sits, but taken away some of the 'box' at the upper end where ones' left hand has to negotiate going up and down the fingerboard. In effect he has made an ergonomic instrument that makes it easier to get around on while producing that rich 'baritone' viola sound.

THS: Thanks so much Juris – all the very best for your retirement!

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

Tania talks to Chris Turpin following her retirement from the position of Principal Timpani, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

THS: *You're from Perth – tell us a bit about your early music training*

CT: Growing up in Perth was a fantastic lifestyle. The beach and river made for endless fun sports and activities, and of course the climate was great for being outdoors. Somewhere in the mix though, music had a look in and was also a great source of joy. Piano lessons in childhood led to applying for one of the high schools in Perth that ran a specialist music program, and so I attended Churchlands Senior High School. They gave me Percussion as my instrument, which I knew little about, and almost didn't go, but thankfully decided to give it a try. That was a good decision.

THS: *I think you may have eventually come to Melbourne – we were at the VCA together at one point! What were your years like at the College and who did you study with?*

CT: After school, University was one year at UWA (University of Western Australia) then transferring to VCA (Victorian College of the Arts) in Melbourne, to complete my music degree in Percussion Performance. John Hopkins was the Dean of Music at VCA, and not only did he love working through very large orchestral repertoire, he featured works by Percy Grainger. This of course was a percussionist's dream, and my first concert with the VCA Orchestra was *The Warriors* by Grainger, and John put all the percussion keyboard instruments at the front of the stage. A really fun way to start at VCA.

THS: *Did you play in other orchestras and freelance before joining the MSO? Was timpani your only percussion instrument or have you played others over the years?*



Photo: Chris Garbacz

CT: Our generation of percussionists were very fortunate with work opportunities. There was lots of varied professional and semi-professional work around. In Perth I'd played with WASO and the Art Orchestra (Ballet Orchestra) and once in Melbourne worked casually with MSO and a variety of other groups. Film work was plentiful. The lack of technology at the time meant lots of percussionists were often needed. Computerised sound effects and even drum machines were only just beginning, so supplementing these sounds often fell to the imagination of the percussion section. Those years were amazing to work and develop as a player. A steep learning curve and plenty of pressure but a fantastic environment to evolve as a musician.

THS: *Tell us about your audition for the MSO job – did they have screens as they do now?*

CT: In 1981 I successfully auditioned for the Section Percussion position in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. We were very busy with only two percussion players and one timpanist in the section, and a schedule of two to three programs per week and three hour calls. Thankfully in later years we expanded to include another percussion position. After six years I successfully auditioned for the Principal Timpani position. The audition process then was slightly different. Screens were in place for the first two rounds, then there was a panel discussion as to whether to establish screens or not for Round Three. In this audition the screens were removed for Round Three. Panel members included the Chief Conductor, Hiroyuki Iwaki (who started musical life as a percussionist); Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Viola, and Oboe Section Principals; a Timpani specialist Alan Cumberland (who had just arrived in Brisbane after twenty years as Principal Timpanist of the London Philharmonic Orchestra) and a management person. We received our excerpts one week

before the audition and this included a 'Test Piece' written by Alan which was really well crafted. Alan also gave us sight-reading on the day during Round Three. One of the candidates commented that the sight-reading was a great violin part but a whole lot of notes for timpani. Great to have a challenge!

THS: *How were the early days in the job?*

CT: So life in the MSO began with churning through the amazing array of Timpani repertoire. Starting with Iwaki as my chief conductor was wonderful. He spoke little, instead communicating with his stick technique, his face and especially his eyes. He watched every single Timpani/Percussion entry and it was very clear if he liked or didn't like the playing. His composers of preference were Stravinsky, Richard Strauss, Shostakovich and Mahler. He loved to use the full orchestra, the big sound. *Rite of Spring* was the last piece of my trial period and his beat for this was so clear and consistent. I felt really fortunate to have learnt so much of this repertoire with Mr Iwaki.

THS: *The construction and mechanics of the timpani are intriguing – can you give us an idea of an aspect of this?*

CT: Towards the end of Mr Iwaki's time with us I began to use Calf Heads. The skills involved with 'cow skins' are not just about the playing but also the setting up of the instruments. The maintenance workload is significantly more, and with no experience or person for guidance there was a lot to learn. The first time John Arcaro and I lapped a head (put a skin on its hoop) it took us the entire afternoon. The skins cost many hundreds of dollars each, so regardless of the outcome you have to use the end result. Of course with practice the process became quite quick but there's still waiting involved as the skin is soaked and needs to dry. With the expense of the skins, maintenance, and the



Chris Turpin on the final night with percussion section colleagues Rob Cossom, John Arcaro and Rob Clarke.

climate control issues, I used plastic heads for outdoor and commercial gigs and calf for the rest. Sidney Myer Music Bowl concerts can be 10-40 C on stage and sometimes all in one evening (this is Melbourne after all!) so using plastic heads for these concerts makes sense.

Performance preparation was all about the drums. If they were ok everything about the playing part of the concert was more enjoyable. Lighting is really important. Balancing too much heat, or not enough, helps or hinders the drums. I had an amazing experience in London at the Royal Albert Hall when we were part of the London Proms series – probably my most favourite concert in all the years of playing. With Sir Andrew Davis conducting, the program was *Don Juan* and *Symphonie Fantastique*. Before the seating rehearsal began the hall's stage manager came up to me and said:

“Ok so you'll need the lighting sorted. What would you like? Shall I put the lights up thirty minutes before the show?” I was so surprised and thankful. This made such a difference and it was so special not to be asking, but to be asked.

THS: *It leads to the interesting question of how many women hold principal timpani or percussion jobs in orchestras and whether it's becoming more commonplace.*

CT: I've been asked on occasion about being a female in this unusual world. It's not something I've really thought about. You do your job to the best of your ability at all times. If it's not working, there's no hiding, so everyone knows and you sort it! I am aware though that I've been very fortunate being surrounded by inspiring and supportive colleagues. It's important here to thank the MSO Percussion Section – Rob Clarke, Rob Cossom and John Arcaro. What a team. I was so spoilt to work with these esteemed players, the four of us working together for twenty-five of my thirty-five years. Also thanks to all the past and present players on the MSO. Once again, so very supportive and certainly listening to these wonderful players has made the job all worthwhile. I look forward to enjoying many performances listening from 'the other side!'

THS: *Do you have any students? what do you pass on to them in terms of the pathway to becoming a professional orchestral musician?*

CT: For younger players today the pathway into this profession is so different. Many things stay the same though. Hard work, using your ears (all the time), being aware of your musical 'gut', as in trusting your natural musical instincts, awareness of your musical environment – musical context and adapting to the given musical situation around you. In other words 'It's all about the music'.

In a logistical way it's also worth being aware that, historically, organisations like SOMA and its earlier versions have done enormous amounts to improve the conditions we work under. It's easy to assume that everything gained has always been there. Not so. People have worked very hard on behalf of we the players over previous decades and we all benefit from their efforts.

THS: *Thanks Chris – and all the very best for your retirement!*

EXPOSED!

ROB CLARK, PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE
TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

BY STEPHANIE ESLAKE

This story was produced by CutCommon on April 4, 2017, in collaboration with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Permission to reprint the interview has been kindly given by Stephanie Eslake and the TSO.

Have you ever wondered what life is really like in the orchestra?
Welcome to EXPOSED!

Throughout 2017, we're teaming up with musicians and arts administrators from the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra to take you behind the scenes, and show you what it means to pursue a career in a challenging and fulfilling industry.

In our latest interview we chat with Rob Clark, who is about to perform his final concert with the TSO after 43 years in the orchestra. Rob was born in Victoria and joined the TSO in '74, performing as principal bass trombonist and travelling with the orchestra across the nation and world. In the years since he started, he's played under the baton of Charles Dutoit, En Shao, Kurt Sanderling and Marko Letonja, and with soloists such as Howard Shelley and Stephen Hough among many, many others.



So after more than four decades on the job, Rob has a thing or two to tell us about a classical music career.

How did you make your way into a position with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra?

I studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium in the early 1970s and worked as a freelance trombonist in Melbourne for a number of years. During this time, I played as a casual with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and with various theatre, ballet and opera orchestras, as well as doing some big band and rock band gigs. It was a fun time even though I was keen to land a full-time orchestral job.

I auditioned for various positions during these years, but it was not until 1974 that I was successful in my audition as bass trombonist with the TSO.

What did you imagine life would be like with the orchestra – and how have you found the experience in reality?

When first getting this permanent position, I focused on my playing as this is what I imagined orchestral life was going to be. But having a full-time position with the TSO for more than 42 years has enabled me to develop lots of musical activities around the job. These have included teaching students both at the Hobart conservatorium and in secondary schools over many years, and of course this led to being heavily involved as an examiner with AMEB.

I have also been involved with a number of chamber groups, a brass trio, a couple of brass quintets and other musical events in Hobart. One highlight was doing Stravinsky's *The Soldiers Tale*, with Michael Fortescue narrating.

How would you describe your typical day backstage and in the rehearsal room?

There is no such thing as a typical day in the orchestra, and this is perhaps why I have enjoyed this life for so many years. The day may vary from a full rehearsal for an upcoming concert, recording sessions, going on tour, schools visits and more. But always one has to somehow fit in some private practice – often for me this might be early in the morning or very late at night.

Rehearsals can be exhilarating at times – for instance, hearing how the bass trombone part I have prepared fits into the whole of a great piece. Other days it can be tedious with endless repetitions of certain bars and phrases. On these days, you really have to concentrate; definitely no daydreaming!

Conductors vary enormously in their approach to rehearsing the orchestra. Some focus on minute detail, others like to explore the broader picture and, of course, there are those who combine both approaches.

What do you feel are the strongest expectations placed on you in the orchestra?

For me, the major expectation is consistency of performance day after day over a long period of time. And it is expected that you play well regardless of your physical or mental state or what is going on in your personal life. The music-making is about the moment and you can't afford 'off days'! Needless, to say, some days don't always go to plan.

Was there ever a time you thought the challenge of your role inside the orchestra would be too great?

Performance can sometimes be stressful so it important to have an outlet outside the orchestra where you can let off steam. I love



Left to right: Jono Ramsey, Dave Robins, Rob Clark, Tim Jones.

being outdoors, so working in my garden or bushwalking are my ways of releasing tension. One of the hardest times for me was when I had a shoulder injury that required me to play the trombone with a supportive brace. It was hard-going for nearly two years, and there were moments when I thought of giving up. However, I had a very supportive environment including professional help organised by TSO and eventually the injury healed.

How do you cope with live performance pressure?

It's natural to feel anxious before a performance even when you know you have prepared as well as possible. I try to have at least 30 minutes of quiet time on my own so that I go into the performance in a relaxed state of mind. But, 'the best plans of mice and men', and all that! Things can go awry, as happened recently when my beloved dog disappeared just before a concert; this wasn't an easy night!

How would you describe the chemistry in your instrumental section, and how do you work to support each other in your team?

Again it is the music that counts when you are working with your colleagues. Regardless of differing temperament and personalities, your focus is on producing the best sound.

For me, having time to play around with new music outside of more formal rehearsals is a great way to support each other and to push our respective boundaries.

What do you wish audiences could understand about what it means to play in the orchestra?

I would love more people to understand that playing in the TSO is a full time job! So often I am asked where I teach, with the assumption that playing in the orchestra is just an add-on to teaching. Many people don't understand that playing the trombone requires a daily commitment of personal practice, let alone maintaining one's instrument and studying the music.

What is the thing you most love about life in the orchestra?

For me, it is about the performance and having 'the best seat in the house'. There is nothing that can compare with the feeling of being surrounded by the music – you literally live it!

What is one piece of advice you can offer young musicians looking to commence their orchestral career?

If you have the passion, follow your dreams if you really want to play. Don't be put off by well-meaning people who tell you that you will never earn a living from music.



PIT AGAINST THE MONEY



By Meredith Snow

Chairperson, ICSSOM (International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians)

Meredith has recently taken over the role of ICSSOM Chairperson from Bruce Ridge.
Reprinted with permission from Meredith Snow

In Terry Teachout's *Wall Street Journal* article "The Money Pit", dated 10/19/16, he uses the book *Tales From The Locker Room: An Anecdotal Portrait of George Szell and his Cleveland Orchestra*, by Lawrence Angell and Bernette Jaffe, as a cautionary tale for orchestral musicians. In 1952, just a few generations ago, the base salary for a 30 week season in Cleveland was \$3240, that's \$29,231 in today's dollars. Sixty percent of the musicians worked additional jobs to make ends meet. By 1967 that 30 weeks



Meredith Snow, ICSOM Chairperson

paid \$11,700, when the median household income in Cleveland was \$7970. In 1968 Cleveland moved to a full 52-week season, and nearly 50 years later the base salary is \$120,000.

Mr. Teachout's conclusion? Don't get comfortable. We should not expect too much in the way of salary increases or concert attendance because we now live "in a world that doesn't value (our) services as highly as (we) do" and "Most Americans don't care about classical music and don't go to orchestral concerts."

I am going to take exception to that.

The Knight Foundation conducted research – the "Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study 2002: National Survey" – and concluded, "It's a myth that very few people in the United States are interested in classical music... Nearly 60% of adults express at least some interest in classical music and one third of these fit classical music into their lives regularly in their autos and at home... Approximately 16% of adults in the US attended a classical concert in the twelve months preceding this survey."

In their just released "Orchestra Facts 2010-2014", the League of American Orchestras, states: in 2014 the 1200+ US orchestras of

all budget sizes contributed \$1.8 billion to the economy in direct payments for goods and services as well as indirectly fuelling the economy through related services. Of the 28,000 performances in 2014, approximately 42% were educational or community engagement, one in four of which were free to the public. While it is true that attendance fell in all performing arts sectors between 2010 and 2014, attendance at classical series concerts kept even with the reduction in classical performances offered.

I think it is safe to say that Americans are listening.

In relation to the "value" of musicians services, Teachout states, "lots of people think they 'deserve' to make higher salaries... The price of labor is determined by the interaction of supply and demand."

While it is true that greater numbers of excellent musicians are graduating from schools every year, why would you not pay to attract the very best available? I assume that the three to ten times greater salaries offered our CEOs and Music Directors are directly correlated to the perception that by paying more, you get the best.

Why then would you sacrifice the very product that you are attempting to market? It is not the price of labor. It is the price of artistry.

Mr. Teachout does make one very important point. It's good to remember your history – how things are today is not how they have always been. American orchestras have made enormous advances in salary and working conditions in the last fifty years. Through concerted effort, union activism and a desire within our communities to foster the cultural institution of a symphony orchestra, we have raised the bar beyond anything seen historically.

How do we maintain that?

First and most importantly, we must be a visible and accessible part of our local communities at all income levels. Ticket prices have dropped an average of 30% at the highest level and 12% at the least expensive since 2010, but we need more attainable pricing and subscriber incentives. It is essential that we have the contractual flexibility to perform outreach concerts and expand our role in education. We need to be able to court our donors with projects that appeal to their community spirit and the desire to foster music for everyone.



It is not the
price of labor.
It is the price
of artistry.

Secondly, our boards and managements must be fully invested in the idea that our orchestras can and should be a growing, vital presence in our communities. Corporate-style downsizing is a slippery slope to dissolution. If the very people who are charged with

overseeing the viability of our orchestras don't believe in artistic excellence and the fundamental role of classical music in our society, they don't belong in our board rooms. We are not asking too much; rather, our boards are asking too little.

Finally, we ourselves need to be proactive within our organizations to attain these goals. It is no longer enough to just play the best Beethoven on your block. Each one of us has the capability and talent to reach out, inspire, and educate. We need to continue to find ways to interact with our public, boards, and management that will galvanize investment in our orchestras and secure the vital role of orchestral music in our communities. We must speak out to counteract the pervasive negative messaging and find new ways to promote our orchestras in the public sector.

There will always be critics like Mr. Teachout, who accuse us of ignoring what they decree to be cultural and economic realities. But we do not have to resign ourselves to their grim predictions. We know that our music can be a positive force in the world; that our message is one worth listening to; and we know that, working together, we can create a solid financial basis for our orchestras to become a cultural priority.

Money talks but music sings.

TANIA TALKS TO BOW CAMPBELL DIRECTOR, MUSICIANS MEAA

THS: *Hi Bow – welcome to the world of professional orchestras!*

BC: Why thank you, it's great to be here.

THS: *How did you make your way to this position? Where are you from originally and what sort of background leads someone to a position such as this one?*

BC: Haha – a long and winding road! I'm a Sydney boy, born and bred, and apart from a brief hiatus in the Blue Mountains, I've never really strayed far from where I grew up in the inner west.

I've come to the MEAA from the Community and Public Sector Union, which is one of Australia's largest unions and works primarily with members in the Federal Public Service. I was an organiser there for 5 years, the majority of which I spent working with members in the ABC. A very interesting but often challenging environment – as your readers would be well aware, it is often

difficult to provide valuable public services and contribute to the nation's cultural heritage while at the mercy of government funding. But a very creative environment and I worked with some great delegates there – I'm sure they'll continue to weather the storm.

Prior to the CPSU I worked in the Market Development division at the Australia Council for the Arts. Market Development worked less with the “supply” of art, and more with the “demand”, and I was responsible for managing the funding of a number of initiatives to build audiences and markets for Australian contemporary music both here and overseas. Through touring and showcasing opportunities we were able to put Australian artists in front of new audiences and industry figures around the world, and some of those opportunities are still paying off for the artists involved. It was during my time at the Australia Council that I became more active as union member and delegate, until I ultimately came to work for a union on a full time basis.



Colour photo: Lauren Katsikitis, black and white photos: Christian Hampson

Before the Australia Council I was at APRA-AMCOS for 8 years, in a number of different roles. But all were to do with ensuring the rights of composers were upheld and that they were appropriately remunerated for the use of their copyright material. I also had a couple of funny little jobs in the music libraries of the Australian Music Centre and what was then Symphony Australia. I got to know photocopiers very well, and I still find it funny that there are probably still some orchestral scores and parts in the libraries of SOMA orchestras that were my handiwork. I apologise for any missing pages or dodgy sticky-tape...

So professionally I've always held roles that are based squarely in the arts, mostly music, and over the years have become more and more involved with union work. I've also been a musician myself for the last 25 years (though not classically trained, I hasten to add!). So when the MEAA position was advertised, looking for someone who "ideally will have held a similar position in a trade

union and/or experience in the music sector", it seemed it would be very silly for me not to apply. Very glad to have been given the role and am enjoying very much so far.

THS: *What is the title of your role and what does it entail?*

BC: My position is Director, Musicians. Which is a fancy title but I don't actually have any staff – it's just me! But I work very closely with the Directors of the other sections of MEAA, as well as our CEO Paul Murphy and Federal President Simon Collins, who I'm sure is no stranger to readers of this publication and is a passionate advocate for musicians and a veritable goldmine of information. I also work closely with our Industrial and membership teams.

At this stage, the role has mostly been all about getting to know our SOMA members and commencing negotiations for new Enterprise Agreements. So the role has a very strong industrial focus. That said, we

have some very well-trained and highly skilled negotiators among the SOMA membership, and I must say they're doing the majority of the work. I'm working to develop strategies to grow and retain our membership, and often deal with members' individual matters as they arise. Another important part of the role is advocacy. For example, we have been talking to state and federal politicians and their advisors about the importance of the National Opera Review and the need to implement its recommendations to ensure the ongoing viability of opera in this country.

THS: *I believe your position differs from that of Howard Manley, your predecessor – can you tell us a bit more about how your role fits in under the broader MEAA umbrella?*

BC: Ah yes, the enormous shoes of Howard that I'm trying to fill! In hindsight, 4 days handover probably wasn't enough to download the contents of the man's brain who'd been in the job for over 20 years. Oh well.

Howard worked exclusively with SOMA, and was the dedicated national officer/director of this section of our union. And I'm not sure that many people know he technically only worked 4 days a week, probably because he always made himself available when needed. I'll try to maintain that tradition.

But I am full time, and my role is different to Howard's in that as well as SOMA, I'm also responsible for those MEAA members who are musicians but are not employed by one of the 8 MPA orchestras. Non-SOMA Musician members at MEAA were historically under the banner of our Entertainment Crew & Sport (ECS) division, and some inroads were made into growing and organising this part of the union. But there is now a clear directive from the union leadership to make the Musicians section very much its own entity, and to have

dedicated resources to facilitate this. So my role is to make this happen.

Apart from SOMA, the Musicians section consists of more informally defined 'sub-sections' – the Theatre Orchestra Musicians Association (TOMA), who are members in the fairly narrow pool of professional musicians who work primarily in musical theatre, and the Australian Freelance Musicians Alliance, who are musicians who could be working in any and all genres but have committed to being part of the union, and also need and deserve our support. There are also an enormous number of musicians in the contemporary music sector who are no doubt supportive of and interested in becoming part of a collective of like-minded professionals (ie their union), but at this stage may not recognise the value of doing so, nor feel capable of committing to membership in a financial sense. So there is a lot of work to be done in identifying what these musicians need, and what we can provide in response.

THS: *And I understand you have some ideas on representation of the wider player group beyond the orchestras – can you tell us a bit about that?*

BC: The thing with the SOMA orchestra musicians is they have, and from my understanding have always had, very well-established representative structures. Players' committees, management committees, leave committees, audition panels – it's all based on a very democratic and merit-based process. And I think the respective orchestra managements recognise the value in this. It may surprise some members to learn that the density of union membership in the SOMA environment is VERY high, compared to other industries in Australia and elsewhere. SOMA is clearly something that is valued and understood as integral to maintaining

and improving the pay and conditions of employees in what is undoubtedly a highly specialised industry, and as such musicians see our union as something that is normal, and something that they both want to be, and should be, a part of.

But SOMA musicians are also working in what could be considered a fairly traditional employer/employee relationship. By which I mean they have organised themselves to the extent that we are able to participate in enterprise bargaining, and to enshrine negotiated working conditions into industrial instruments that are recognised under law and can therefore be challenged under industrial law if breached.

Non-SOMA musicians don't necessarily have the same opportunities, and in my opinion are therefore some of our most vulnerable and potentially marginalised members. Becoming 'active' as a union member/activist and trying to address inequalities or discrepancies in working conditions brings with it inherent risk – if you stick your head over the parapet, it may get shot off. You may not get another gig. **YOU'LL NEVER WORK IN THIS TOWN AGAIN!**

So I think we need to work very hard to get together, to provide experience and support for each other, and to use our shared resources to improve the outlook for musicians of all stripes. As I've been going around the country talking to members in the SOMA orchestras, I've also been meeting with contemporary music peak bodies in each state to explore opportunities for collaboration and data-sharing. I am meeting with both the Australia Council and APRA-AMCOS in the coming weeks to do the same, and as discussed have begun discussions with state and federal politicians on all sides to further the interests of Australia's musicians. We need to be an active, engaged

and responsive union that can provide relevant services and advocacy, regardless of the industrial framework our members are operating under. Watch this space.

THS: *What attracted you to working with the musicians? does your past life give us clues as to why you chose to move into this type of work?*

BC: I have been a musician (and I use the term relatively loosely) for a long time. My father was a an active and aware folk musician in the 70s and some of my earliest memories are accompanying him, along with my mum and three siblings, to his concerts and recordings around the country and around the world. For some people music isn't something that you choose to do, it's something that you have to do. In my case, although it's more of a hobby and less of a lifestyle these days, it's very important to me to have that creative outlet and I'm fortunate enough to have been in the same band, with the same people, for over 25 years. It's not an overly lucrative pastime for us, but as far as pastimes go, it's very rewarding. We can still do a national tour and get enough people to shows to make it worthwhile. We have made 8 albums, done a lot of touring domestically and internationally, and even won an ARIA award along the way. We make music on our own terms.

I have also developed a keen interest in social justice and in the power of collective action. For me, being able to combine two of my personal and professional passions – music and smashing the state – is an opportunity not to be missed and I hope to be able to combine the two for the benefit of both. Please join me.

THS: *I believe you've hit the ground running! Any observations about the process of negotiations with regard to the 7 EBs you're currently involved in?*

BC: “Hit the ground running”, you say? If you’ve left out the bit that says “like a chicken with its head cut off”, you might be right.

But seriously, there has been and continues to be a lot to learn. But my immediate observation is that for the most part, in all the negotiations I’m currently involved in (ASO, OV, OAO, WASO, MSO and soon to be TSO and QSO), there is a very mature and mutually respectful dialogue between the musicians’ representatives and those of management. There does seem to be an inherent understanding that the success of a professional symphony orchestra, irrespective of its financial situation, is entirely dependent upon the quality and cohesion of its musicians. It’s up to us to make our case in the most articulate and convincing way possible. Everyone understands the uncertainty of ongoing government funding. We understand the need for company boards to be financially astute and sometimes cautious, if not downright conservative. But that does not, and should not mean that we lose sight of what orchestras exist to do, and that is to dig deep, to work hard, and to reflect back to our society the best of what we can be. Humans are a funny bunch, and maybe I’m biased, but I genuinely believe that musicians are doing the world a favour. It’s up to us to convince the world of that, and make sure we get what we need in return. When it comes to art, the artistic high ground is the only ground to take.

THS: *In your busy schedule have you managed to go to any concerts?*

BC: Have I what? Of course.

La Bohème with OAO at the Sydney Opera House in January. *Young Russians* with SSO in March. An educational performance with star-struck secondary students care of ASO in February. *Faster* with OV in Melbourne in April. Plus sitting in on rehearsals where

possible with WASO and QSO. I will take any opportunity I can get to see our members in action, and to expand my somewhat stunted knowledge of music in the process. It’s been a real pleasure to get access to the backstages, the greenrooms, the pits, the actual stages – your workplaces. Not so dissimilar to the backstages I’m familiar with, although they are admittedly less covered in graffiti and don’t smell like stale beer and/or urine. It’s vital that I see and hear you doing what you do, so let’s make that happen.

THS: *SOMA has enjoyed good representation at a few FIM conferences by a number of our players. With the 4th international FIM conference coming up in Montreal, what are you looking forward to?*

BC: I’ve always found that broad union forums, whether locally-based training or an international conference, with delegates from other unions or regions, to be incredibly rewarding. Obviously there’s a shared ideology and sense of purpose, but to share experiences relative to your respective industry or place of origin provides a whole new sense of perspective. I remember talking to an organiser at an ACTU training session, who was with the AMIEU and worked primarily with members who were meat workers and who did not have English as their first language. Clearly a very different industry and experience to mine (the ABC at the time), but the core issues were invariably the same, and to hear about and share each other’s experience was fantastic.

What I’m most looking forward to from the 4th FIM International Orchestra Conference in Montréal is just that – the opportunity to meet, talk to and learn from our international colleagues and counterparts. And I’m sure there’s an equal amount of curiosity about how we do things down this way, and look forward to be able to present that to the wider



delegate group. SOMA President Mark Bruwel is a panelist on a forum around orchestras and their use of digital technologies, which has been enlightening just in terms of learning what we are up to here in Australia, let alone how that compares to overseas. I also have a particular interest in talking to representatives from the British Musicians Union about their arrangements with collection and distribution of residual broadcast/recording royalties to their (30,000+) membership – if we can establish a similar scheme here, we would be able to offer a significant benefit to our members. Similarly, there are arrangements in place with the American unions that could offer some practical solutions to some of the hurdles we face here in Australia around contract employment. So there it's very much a data-gathering and information-sharing exercise. Also, Poutine.

(Ed – Poutine is a Canadian dish, originating in the province of Quebec, made with French fries and cheese curds topped with a light brown gravy. This fast-food dish is typically found across Canada and in some places in the northern United States.)

THS: Any thoughts on the future?

BC: Well, three months into the job I suspect it's a little premature for me to be making any authoritative forecasts. But since you ask...

My experience thus far with enterprise bargaining in the SOMA orchestras is that despite the relative civility and mutual respect shown between the parties, there are still some fundamental differences in approach, and different responsibilities and priorities to the respective constituencies of those on either side of the table. It's very easy to understand that the visibility, vibrancy and viability of an orchestra, whether in the pit, on the stage, at the beach, on a boat, etc, is entirely dependent upon the quality, calibre and cohesion of its players. But there are also financial and operational imperatives that need to be considered, and the trick will always be to find the balance between the two. The uncertainty of government funding and corporate/philanthropic support, the need for modern organisations to be "flexible", "agile", "nimble" – whatever the latest buzzword is, will always come into play.

We await a formal and public response to the National Opera Review. I wouldn't be at all surprised if there is another orchestral review on the cards. The track record of the current government on the arts and arts policy is in plain sight. But we're fortunate to be in an industry populated by creative, intelligent, passionate, and committed people. People who neither fear nor shy away from change, but who

are staunch in their support for the rights and respect that they deserve. Should be an interesting ride.

More broadly, I think there is a vast opportunity in the contemporary music sector for us to become a real voice for musicians, irrespective of genre/discipline, and we'll be working hard to identify and capitalise on those opportunities. The MEAA Musicians

Section should be a positive and supportive community of like-minded professionals, and a force to be reckoned with!

THS: *Thanks so much for your time. Enjoy the conference and the rest of what I imagine is going to be a very busy year!*

BC: Thanks for the opportunity – look forward to working with you all.

SOMA INDUSTRIAL UPDATE JUNE 2017

Enterprise bargaining has commenced and is ongoing in six of the eight SOMA orchestras:

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (ASO)

The team at ASO are seeking a three year agreement, with appropriate salary increases to reflect the rise of cost of living, and address the disparity in salaries between the ASO and other mainland orchestras. Improvements are also being sought to recording and broadcasting rights, along with an “artistic vibrancy” package, addressing issues around professional development, and transition to retirement or an alternative career

Opera Australia Orchestra (OAO)

OAO bargaining representatives are pursuing a three year agreement, along with a 4% p.a. salary increase, improvements to parking arrangements for players at the Sydney Opera House, and commitments from management to restore the orchestra to its full establishment strength.

Orchestra Victoria (OV)

OV representatives are seeking a three year agreement, with their main priority

being the issue of the three year contracts implemented for new employees when OV was taken over by the Australian Ballet in 2014. The team are seeking measures that will see “contract” musicians no worse off than their permanent counterparts, and that will in turn make OV and employer of choice for high-quality musicians around the country.

West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO)

Opting for a one year agreement while issues around the Perth Concert Hall are resolved, WASO players are seeking a modest salary increase in line with CPI, along with a slight increase in employer co-contributions to superannuation.

Melbourne (MSO) and Tasmania (TSO)

have formally commenced bargaining and are developing their respective logs of claims. **Queensland (QSO)** will commence negotiating a new agreement before the end of the year. **Sydney Symphony (SSO)** completed a marathon 18 month negotiation in late 2016 with their new three year agreement for 2016-2018.



Matt Goddard

TSO Principal Timpani and
SOMA Federal Executive member

4th FIM International Orchestra Conference in Montréal

The 4th FIM International Orchestra Conference took place in Montréal, Canada from May 11th – 14th. There were around 200 delegates at the conference, with five delegates from Australia attending: Simon Collins (President, MEAA), Bow Campbell, (Director, Musicians MEAA), Cam Brook (WASO, President, Musicians' Section, MEAA), Mark Bruwel (OAO, President, SOMA) and myself, Matt Goddard (TSO, SOMA Federal Executive member).

We each arrived in Montréal at various points in the preceding days and in varying states of jetlag attended the welcome function at the Conseil des Arts de Montréal on the evening of Thursday 11th. As well as the opportunity to meet informally with our international colleagues there was the award ceremony for the FIM Airline of Choice Award. This year's winner was Air Canada who, in addition to sponsoring eight orchestras in Canada, allows as hand luggage any musical



Simon Collins, Federal President MEAA and Bow Campbell, Director, Musicians MEAA.

instrument that will fit under the seat or in the overhead locker, and pre-boards anyone with an instrument so that they can get to the lockers before they are full. Additionally, the airline offers a 50% discount on the fare for a seat purchased for a cello and applies the discount to all fares not just the most expensive. It was refreshing to hear a good news story about airlines and instruments!

DAY 1: Friday 12th

Friday saw the start of the conference proper. Each 1 ¾ hour session featured a panel of four plus a moderator with each panel member speaking to the session's subject from their context with questions and comments from the floor later in the session – not unlike ABC's Q and A. Today's sessions

included management representatives as well the musicians. After the opening addresses from John Smith (FIM President and General Secretary of the British Musicians' Union), Ray Hair (Vice-President FIM and President of the American Federation of Musicians) and Luc Fortin (President, guild of Quebec Musicians) we heard from keynote speakers the Hon. Liza Frulla and Allison Beck.

Liza Frulla is the Director General of the Institut de Tourisme et d'Hôtellerie and has served as the Minister for Heritage in the Canadian Federal parliament. She spoke of the importance of accessibility of orchestras for children from a young age and that if as a child you realise, through education, that you have access to culture then when you are older you will realise that you can't live without it. It was refreshing to

hear someone from within the political sphere speak so passionately about this.

Alison Beck is a Labour Relations expert and was a Federal Mediator in the US. She spoke of the basis of a good employer-employee relationship and gave practical examples of how such a relationship leads to good outcomes for all involved.

Today's sessions looked at the *Public Value of Orchestras*, *Business Models of Orchestras*, *What's Working?* and *Orchestras Integrating Digital Tools and New Approaches*, with our own Mark Bruwel being a panel member for this final session for the day.

One of the highlights of today was the presentation by Katherine Carleton, Executive Director of Orchestras Canada where she discussed the difficulties in advocating for orchestras, how best to proceed given those difficulties and the need to be able to identify the different areas of value that orchestras offer and know where to place the focus when talking about it, whether that be with a politician or a member of the public who never goes to a concert.

It was also interesting to hear about the varying business structures of orchestras around the world, ranging from those that are not government funded through to the self-governing that exists in some orchestras in London. Robert Massey, CEO of the Jacksonville Symphony in the US spoke to us about how he turned that orchestra around financially and culturally by strategically focussing on the musicians having what they need and being happy in their jobs to achieve this success.

The evening was spent at a Gala Concert for the Concours Musical International de Montréal featuring the Montréal Symphony Orchestra and an array of soloists.

DAY 2: Saturday 13th

The morning started, management representatives still in attendance, with a detailed discussion around governance and the role that a musician can play on the board of an orchestra in a session titled *Responsibility and accountability: role of musicians on orchestra boards*.

As a board member, the musician's first responsibility is to the board, however there inevitably will be conflict when the view of the board differs from that of the musicians. Whether musicians should serve on boards given that tension and the ways in which musicians can have input in board activity, and how to manage the conflicted points of view provided for interesting discourse.

Next was a session titled *Bullying and Harassment – Respective roles of the trade union and the management*. There was a lot of useful discussion here and a variety of approaches evident, but central to the discussion was that this is a difficult area to deal with, given that often the bullying itself is not obvious to anyone other than the person being bullied, and that inherent in our work is a fragility that makes the line between harassment and "firm management" different to that of some other kind of workplace.

The union has an important role in helping to formulate the ways of identifying and dealing with the issue within our orchestras, and in representing musicians in the process but importantly cannot be the arbitrator.

The conference became a musician-only affair after lunch with the first session being an opportunity for any follow-up from the discussions so far and for anyone to report on issues of interest that have arisen in their orchestras. This was followed by a discussion on the *Practical Aspects of Outreach and Education*.

Day 3: Sat 14th

The first of two sessions on this last day of the conference looked at *Recorded Broadcasts and the Rights of Musicians*. The landscape has changed very much in recent years and will continue to change as technology improves. Performers' Rights is a very complex area and Horace Trubridge of the British Musicians' Union, speaking from the floor, demonstrated an incredible depth of knowledge in this area. In the UK, as in much of the world, the younger generation listens to music through streaming services and 'dark screen' YouTube. The law differentiates between radio and streaming on the basis that streamed media can be stopped and started and the type of right that is assigned to this mode of delivery belongs to rights owners rather than performers. This is just one (perhaps poorly explained!) example of the complexities of this area.

The final session for the 2017 IOC considered *The role of trade unions in safeguarding the future of the orchestra*. This session highlighted the many ways in which musicians and our unions can and do contribute in this way. The obvious case

is that of ensuring working conditions that enable us all to perform at the level needed to produce the highest quality performances that we can, which is paramount to why we do what we do. Beyond that though is that with our collective knowledge and long term commitment to our orchestras we are very well placed to advocate for their continued existence. If we are included in the non-artistic aspects of running our organisations we have much to offer.

Attending the IOC was a valuable experience for us all. The amount of material covered, as evidenced by the 40 pages of notes in my notebook, was overwhelming and it will take a little while to process it all. However there were many immediately relevant ideas to use back here in Australia. It was a highlight to meet our counterparts in orchestras from around the world and see that we are all facing similar issues, often nuanced in different ways and with differing approaches to dealing with them. We all have much to learn from each other and the value of such a forum for unions representing musicians around the world can't be underestimated.



Mark Bruwel, President SOMA as conference panellist.

Vale: Richard Divall

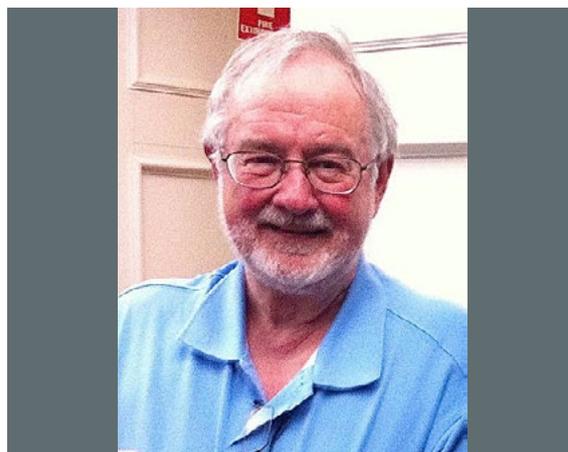
Stephen Robinson
Orchestra Victoria

It was with sadness and a sense of disbelief that we learned of the passing of Richard Divall in January of this year. Having been a major part of the Melbourne music scene for many decades, it was very hard to imagine that we were not going to see him in front of us again; conducting with warmth, musical passion, and his uniquely enthusiastic style.

Richard arrived in Melbourne from Sydney by way of Brisbane to be the Music Director of the newly formed Victoria State Opera in 1972. From very small beginnings Richard steadily grew the company until it became one of the major companies in the country. Because of his depth of conviction – not to mention his larger than life personality – Richard was excellent at convincing prospective sponsors that VSO was the best place for their money. But it was on the podium – where words are useless – that he made his greatest contribution to the success of the company.

The rationalisation of orchestral services for opera and ballet recommended in the 1985 Tribe Report, led to Orchestra Victoria (then the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust Melbourne Orchestra) doing less interstate touring for Opera Australia and The Australian Ballet and remaining in Melbourne to play for VSO as their performance partner. It was an exciting and stimulating time with Richard as one of our main conductors.

In the theatre Richard always knew what he wanted. He was excellent at judging the pace of a performance. He knew when to milk a moment, and when to move on. It was quite



a revelation on the night he took over a season of Rigoletto from a guest conductor and brought the performance in a full ten minutes earlier. He would insist that singers follow his tempo, and would often say to the orchestra in stern tones that he knew what he was doing so we should stick with him no matter what was happening on stage. One imagines that the singers were told something similar. With the odd exception, it was an excellent policy which delivered powerful, dynamic, and coherent performances without an excess of sentimentality.

Financial difficulties beset VSO in the late 1990s leading to the eventual merger with Opera Australia. Despite his appointment as chief resident conductor at OA, and some guest conducting with The Australian Ballet, Richard found himself conducting less in the State Theatre and turned his attention to his academic work.

Richard remained a friend of our orchestra – and indeed all orchestras. Since then we have collaborated on many projects, the most regular being the yearly Herald-Sun Aria Final that launched the careers of many of the opera stars of today. These performances shone as a clear example of the passion and dedication to the art form that Richard retained until the end.

Richard's funeral was held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne last January.

He would have rather liked it. Grand, stately, but truly heartfelt.

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Lachlan Bramble, Associate Principal 2nd Violin

Careful readers will recall from the last ASO report this author's enthusiasm for the public announcement of plans for a futuristic concert hall to be built on the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site. Since then the ASO has submitted alternative plans to the Adelaide City Council to convert the Sir Samuel Way Building (situated right near the central market and a dead ringer for the Musikverein on the outside) into a 1600 seat concert hall. It is great to have a couple of pots on the boil and super exciting that the concert hall idea is occupying such a central place in public discourse.

This year it was great for the ASO to be back, front and centre for the Adelaide Festival. The orchestra was involved in three presentations, most notably the recapitulation of Barry Kosky's ultra-camp Glyndebourne production of *Saul* by Handel. Those musicians who were involved will long remember the quality and extravagance of the production and also what a great addition to the orchestra a 'bar-rocking' Catalonian theorbo player is.

Putting our regular concerts aside for a moment, the ASO has spent much more time than usual in the recording studio, laying down tracks with Greta Bradman for Decca and with the Grigoryan brothers for ABC Classics. As listeners to Classic Drive will know, you can never have too much classical guitar!

And ASO has been on the road, bussing it to Mount Gambier in May for Generations in Jazz. We joined James Morrison and 5000 very excited school children in a big tent on a paddock for an epic showcase concert of jazz standards. The atmosphere was electric in an Olympic Games kind of way – faster, louder, higher, stronger...

Juris Ezergailis (Principal Viola) retired from the ASO at the end of 2016 after 42 years on the job – such a huge achievement in so many ways. Mitch Berwick (clarinets big and small) married Ailsa Patterson in January, and Elizabeth Collins (Violin) gave birth to baby Lachlan in May.

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Opera Australia Orchestra

Mark Bruwel, Oboe

The biggest news for us is that we've changed our name to the Opera Australia Orchestra. This year is also our 50th birthday as an Orchestra having gone through a couple of name changes since starting out as 'The Trust'. Much has changed in the last 50 years, much has not!

Enterprise bargaining is currently underway, however there is nothing yet in place to report at the time of printing. Opera Australia has had a very successful summer season at the Box Office and HOSH (Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour – *Carmen* this year) also sold well despite a couple of very wet nights. Across Opera Australia all employees have made considerable sacrifices to help keep the Company afloat during the fallout from the GFC so we are all anticipating this round of EB negotiations will start to recognize those sacrifices.

A couple of highlights this year artistically have been some wonderful performances of Szymanowski's *King Roger* – an amazing score – and much anticipation for upcoming performances of *Parsifal* with Jonas Kaufmann and Verdi's *Requiem* conducted by Verdi wizz Renato Palumbo.

The last seven months of 2017 will see us out of the Joan Sutherland Theatre at the Opera House and living more itinerantly at the Capitol Theatre and the Town Hall. Whilst the majority of the work in our theatre will be 'behind the scenes', we are looking forward to some minor alterations in the Orchestra Pit and a new sound enhancement system for the Theatre. Fingers crossed, we'll be in for New Years' Eve.

At the time of writing, five of us from SOMA are just about to head over to represent our Union at the 4th FIM International Orchestra Conference to be held in Montréal. This promises to be a fantastic event, a full report will be in the next edition of *Senza Sord*.

This was a fantastic event. You can read Matt Goddard's report earlier in this issue.

Orchestra Victoria

Josh de Graaf, Associate Principal Oboe

“Harlot, floozy tart, bimbo”. And so 2017 began in OV with Victorian Opera’s production of *‘Tis Pity*. Composed by Richard Mills, the production featured Meow Meow and Kanen Breen with the orchestral score containing a colourful vocal fugue!!

Following that, a delightful (as always) wind chamber concert and then back to the home ground in the State Theatre pit for a season of *Faster* with The Australian Ballet. The string section working particularly hard and possibly glad to see the back of that!

A hugely successful Hamilton Festival followed. Opened by our wonderful brass ensemble, the festival grows year on year and features the orchestra as educators (through the mOVE program – this time conducted by the magnificent Dom Harvey), chamber musicians and finally as a whole orchestra. It was also lovely to welcome back Johannes Fritzsch for the final concert.



Photo: Gavin Green

More chamber concerts took us through Easter, specifically Haydn’s moving string quartet *Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*.

A concert performance of *La Sonnambula* (with Victorian Opera – sans vocal fugues!) took us through to the Opera Australia season we find ourselves in now.

EA negotiations have begun for us, carrying extra significance as we try and navigate a workable way around three year contracts.

Some comings and goings at OV:

- Justin Beere successfully auditioned and has begun his trial as Associate Principal Clarinet
- after starting with OV nine years ago, moving to TAB and then returning as our General Manager, Julie Amos is leaving us to take up a position at HotHouse Theatre, Albury.

Finally, I must mention that the year has not been without sadness for the Orchestra having played at the funeral for Maestro Richard Divall in January and Betty Amsden in March. While others will be far more qualified than I to speak of their contribution to OV (and indeed the arts in general), I know them as great friends of this orchestra, and while we celebrate their lives, they will be greatly missed.

Cheers,
Josh

Josh de Graaf, Tania Hardy Smith and Anthony Pope, Hamilton Festival 2017.

Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Andre Duthoit, Cello

Richard Madden, Associate Principal Trumpet

2017 started well with Wagner and Mahler Symphony No. 1 with our new Artistic Director and Chief Conductor Alondra de la Parra leading a sold out performance. *Ein Heldenleben* with Conductor Laureate Johannes Fritsch was another early highlight.

David Pratt has continued his cool, calm start as our boss. David has help set a really positive outlook for our orchestra and art form. Even though the writers of this blurb agree with the philosophy, the remainder of this rant will have a basic negative tone!

This is a big year for ballet and opera for us with two English National Ballet projects and four other pit seasons. Regional touring includes Gladstone, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Roma and Chinchilla.

April saw the arrival of new Principal Bass Phoebe Russell. Besides leading the bass

section, Phoebe also enjoys walking Andre and Helen's Maremma who deposits multiple stools of a different kind.

Richard Madden's golf handicap is improving though questions have been raised as to how can he count shots when he can't count bars (well, musical bars anyway).

Shane Chen from the Flinders Quartet has joined the first violins.

Recently, bass virtuoso Edicson Ruiz from the Berlin Philharmonic played three concerts with The Queensland Symphony Orchestra including the Trout Quintet as part of the highly successful Chamber Series. Edicson buoyed the orchestra with stories of how winging is the main game even in the Berlin Philharmonic.

Lots more auditions this year... Upcoming are Principal Flute, and hopefully before the year is out, Associate Principal Cello and Principal Violin.

Nick Harmsen has just had a baby boy, and Bec Seymour and Irit Silver will access maternity leave soon.

Let us conclude with the tragic tale of the over worked violinist Harry Wilson complaining about having to do everything in the two concert and photo shoot week, who when arriving for the general rehearsal of one concert asked management to set up a chair for him to be told "you are not rostered on this gig".



With permission from QSO

Nicole Tait – Section Principal Bassoon, Paul O'Brien – Double Bass, Nicholas Tomkin – Viola, David Mitchell – Associate Principal Bassoon

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Rosemary Curtin, Viola

SSO has some interesting times ahead with the search now on for a new chief executive. Rory Jeffes will be leaving us at the end of July for his new role as CEO of Opera Australia. We congratulate Rory on his new position and thank him for a great eight years at the helm.

Earlier this year we thanked and farewelled our Director of Artistic Planning Ben Schwartz who has taken up a role in Artistic Planning with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. In his place we welcomed Raff Wilson. Raff is no stranger to the SSO having previously held the position of Artistic Administration Manager. Raff returns to us from the Hong Kong Philharmonic where he held the position of Director of Artistic Planning there.

We kicked off 2017 with two sweltering but successful outdoor performances for the Festival of Sydney, one in the Sydney Domain and the other in Parramatta Park. Our Concertmaster Andrew Haveron and Principal Viola Tobias Breider gave masterful performances at both concerts of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* to appreciative audiences.

Back indoors at the Sydney Opera House we welcomed in the Chinese New Year with Tan Dun conducting his *Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women – Symphony for harp, 13 micro films, and orchestra (2013)*. Louise Johnson, our Principal Harp, featured and played beautifully.



Photo: Christie Brewster

Our official Season Opening Gala welcomed Chief Conductor David Robertson back to Sydney in February with wonderful performances by Maxim Vengerov of Brahms' Violin Concerto. The premiere of Nigel Westlake's beautifully crafted Oboe Concerto, *Spirit of the Wild* featuring stunning performances by our Principal Oboe Diana Doherty was another highlight of these Robertson weeks. We look forward to taking the Westlake on tour with us to China later this year.

The Westlake commission was the result of the generous support of Jane Mathews AO and Symphony Services International. We also enjoyed another recent commission showcasing Australian Trombonist Michael Mulcahy. Carl Vine's *Five Hallucinations for Trombone and Orchestra* was a joint commission by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with the generous support



Photo: Keith Saunders

Above: "Thank you Geoff ": Geoff O'Reilly Principal 3rd Horn in action left, with colleagues Euan Harvey and Principal Horn Ben Jacks

Left: Russian Piano Virtuoso Daniil Trifonov with the Sydney Symphony and conductor Gustavo Gimeno

of Geoff Ainsworth AM and Johanna Featherstone, and Kim Williams AM.

Other recent highlights have included performances of Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* under WASO's Principal Conductor Asher Fisch and a visit by the Russian piano virtuoso Daniil Trifonov performing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1.

Our new series Playlist Series featuring individual musicians' greatest hits is in its second year and growing in popularity at Angel Place. Leah Lynn, Assistant Principal Cello chose the first program with some terrific choices and performances and charmed the audience with her narrative.

Away from the classics we have enjoyed a collaboration with singer Kate Miller-Heidke and guitarist Kier Nuttal in our Kaleidoscope Series which this year features three female singer-songwriters. Our first film series of the year was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, appreciated by 12,000 audience members in six sold out performances!

We congratulated Todd Gibson Cornish on his permanent appointment as Principal Bassoon. And we farewelled Neil Brawley, Emeritus Principal Double Bass who recently retired after 34 years with the SSO. Neil regaled us on his final evening with some amazing stories of his early days as an ABC orchestral musician and helped us realise how far we've come.

Congratulations also go to Dave Elton and Rachel Silver on the arrival of their son Charlie in January this year.

Finally thanks must go out to Geoff O'Reilly who after 17 years or so and various executive roles has retired from committees... for the time being at least!

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Matt Goddard, Principal Timpani

As mentioned in the last issue of *Senza Sord*, 2016 ended and 2017 started with a twelve day tour to China. We performed three programmes over nine concerts in seven cities. The tour was a great success and ran just about as smoothly as we could have hoped. Upon our return we had some well-earned annual leave and before we knew it, we were back at work with our standard start-of-the year fare of some conductor training, recording and rain-free outdoor concerts.

The beginning of March saw the return of Chief Conductor Marko Letonja and Beethoven Symphony No.9 to open the season properly, followed by a couple of

weeks recording and performing with soprano Lorina Gore in a programme celebrating Dame Nellie Melba. We then embarked on a week's collaboration with ANAM where we performed *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and, for the first time in TSO's history, *Rite of Spring*.

The beginning of April saw the final concert of Principal Bass Trombone, Rob Clark, who retired after an illustrious career of forty-three years with the orchestra. Best wishes to Rob for the next phase.

At the time of writing we are a week away from beginning negotiations for our next Enterprise Agreement, slightly later than planned but touring, sickness and other interruptions



TSO plays at the Puxian Grand Theatre, Putian, Fujian Province China.



Photo: Alistair Bett

The orchestra performing their annual Symphony Under the Stars concert at Tolosa Park in Hobart in February

contrived to delay us getting started. I've just returned from the FIM International Orchestra Conference in Montréal which I attended as one of the SOMA Delegates.

In other good news, we were thrilled with the recent announcement of the appointment of Johannes Fritsch as our Principal Guest Conductor from 2018 for three years.



Photo: Alistair Bett

Soprano Lorina Gore with Chief Conductor Marko Letonja and the TSO perform Ode to Nellie Melba in the Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Rachael Kirk, Viola

As always, the year began with our annual Company Training Day which also serves as a catch-up for the musicians after the annual leave period. We had an extremely interesting presentation by Lifeline which may have been the inspiration behind the large number of employees signing up for a Mental Health First Aid training course to be held in June.

For the Harry Potter fans amongst us, the performance of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was another highlight and a huge success both at the box office and as a vehicle for introducing new audiences to a symphony orchestra. Most of us (except perhaps the violins) are looking forward to our return to Hogwarts in November.

A small version of WASO made a rare appearance in the Perth International Arts Festival (local arts companies generally get overlooked) in *The Dark Mirror: Zender's Winterreise* which involved virtuosic playing as well as the requirement for all musicians to appear in make-up and 1920's hairdos. I think some were glad it was performed in semi-darkness!

Other musical highlights have been a visit by the Zukerman Trio for the Beethoven Triple Concerto and Berg Violin Concerto, and whirlwind performances of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 by Daniil Trifonov.

Zak Rowntree, Ben Caddy, Ellie Lawrence and Rod McGrath heading off to a performance in Karijini National Park.



Photo provided by Zak Rowntree

As part of our regional community program, at Easter a string quartet of intrepid explorers ventured to the picturesque Karijini National Park in the Pilbara to perform in the Karijini Experience, presenting children's concerts and collaborating with indigenous artists in a number of stunning gorge settings. By all accounts it was a life-changing experience and not just because they were restricted to one minute showers!

Following the demise of the official WASO chamber series a few seasons ago, the players have recently launched their own lunchtime chamber series which is held in the beautiful foyer setting of the Perth Concert Hall. We would like to thank the wonderful staff at the PCH for their help in making this happen.

Trials for tutti violin and viola positions are currently underway and during the year we will see a line-up of potential candidates for the Associate Concertmaster position. On the EB front we're still tweaking the one-year Agreement due to expire at the end of 2017.

No major changes but it still seems to take time and energy.

Comings and goings since the last edition of *Senza Sord*:

Late last year Graeme Norris passed his trial for the position of Principal First Violin and we welcome him into the WASO family.

Sadly, we've had several recent resignations: Troy Gretz (Associate Principal Percussion/ Timpani) and his family have been lured back to the warm climes of their home state of Queensland. Sharn McIver (Associate Principal Horn) has recently returned to Sydney, and Anna Darbyshire (Tutti Violin) resigned earlier this year to spend more time with her young family. They'll be missed and we wish them all well in their future endeavours.

On the baby front we congratulate Akiko Miyazawa (Violin) and Lachlan Skipworth (WASO Composer-in-Residence) on the birth of their first child, Yuki Miyazawa Skipworth, born in November last year. In February, Jane Kircher-Lindner (Principal Bassoon) and husband Dave welcomed their second child Gretchen Rose, and Josh Davis (Principal Trombone) and his wife Donna also added to their family with the arrival of baby Mark Baden.



New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Lyndsay Mountfort, Viola

NZSO's year started with a nationwide tour with vocal quartet, the Modern Māori Quartet, with their unique and entertaining take on the traditional Māori garage party travelling to 12 cities. Along the way, we managed to fit in accompanying the 50th National Concerto Competition final in Christchurch and free gala concert in Wellington to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the orchestra's first concert. All three programmes were directed by newly appointed Associate Conductor, Hamish McKeich.

March saw the return of MD Edo de Waart, opening his second season with two tours, one featuring Strauss' *Alpine Symphony*, and the other of Mozart and Beethoven, featuring the extraordinary clarinetist, Martin Fröst.

The annual SOUNZ New Zealand music sessions took place in April this year, with the orchestra spending four days rehearsing and recording ten works, and performing



Photo: NZSO

NZSO's returning Principal Horn Sam Jacobs with trombonist Matt Allison, checking out the merchandise of sponsor Coutts Mercedes-Benz.



Photo: Saskia van Rijk

Groupies for NZSO soloist Narek Hakhnazaryan.

them to an invited audience of composers and orchestra managers. Many musicians felt the standout work was Louise Webster's new Violin Concerto, with NZSO's Assistant Concertmaster Yuka Eguchi giving a stunning performance as soloist.

May is New Zealand Music Month, and also seems to be Cello month this year, and both of these were recognised in a programme including a new Cello Concerto *Chemin des Dames* from Gareth Farr, which pays tribute to the soldiers who fell on the First World War battlefields of France and Belgium, and the families they left behind. The soloist, Adam International Cello Competition winner Sébastien Hurtaud, will play the concerto again in France in September.

The remainder of May is being spent touring Dvořák and Tchaikovsky with cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan and Singapore-based conductor Darryl Ang. The cello theme continues into June with Daniel Müller-Schott returning to New Zealand to play the Schumann concerto.



Photo: Jochen Stossberg

Poster boy (and NZSO percussionist) Bruce McKinnon on the Auckland Town Hall

So far in 2017 NZSO has welcomed two new appointees, Ellen Deverall (Christchurch Symphony principal) as Associate Principal Clarinet, and Sam Jacobs who returns to the NZSO as Principal Horn. Additionally, Joan Perarnau Garriga (formerly Associate Principal Double Bass) has been appointed Section Principal. We've had one departure, as Phillip Rose (Tutti Viola) retired after 23 years with us. And an arrival of another sort, with the birth of Saoirse Hazel Isaac on 26 February to NZSO cellist Sally Isaac and husband Jason.

A significant task for the upcoming months will be holding auditions and interviews, with vacancies for Associate Principal Bass, Associate Principal Second Violin, Sub-principal (2nd) Horn and tutti positions in the first violins (1), violas (2) and basses (2). And on the administration side, we're recruiting for Head of Artistic Planning, Orchestra Coordinator and Production and Transport Manager.

SOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE MEETING

Sydney, April 2-3 2017 – Agenda

- Intro/welcome to new Exec members
- Previous Minutes and Matters Arising
- SOMA Financials & Membership
- Orchestra Reports
- National Opera Review
- FIM IOC Conference
- Recording/Broadcast Agreements
- Small Ensembles
- SOMA Conference
- Senza Sord – next edition
- Orchestra Victoria & three year contracts
- Leave to audition
- Long Service Leave calculations
- Guest appearance from Paul Murphy
- Any other business
- Next Meeting

If anyone would like any further information on the above, or if you have any questions regarding industrial issues in general (personal or otherwise), please see your SOMA representative.

OTHER INFORMATION

If you are a member of SOMA, you should also be receiving fairly regular emails from MEAA specifically related to SOMA issues. If this is not the case, perhaps this is a good time to update your email address with MEAA!

Contact

MEAA Member Central
Phone: 1300 656 513
Email: members@meaa.org

And for your information the Pay Roll Deduction payment option for SOMA membership fees has been made available on the 'Join MEAA' online application form (meaa.org).

MEAA Application Form – SOMA Section



I, _____ of the _____ Orchestra hereby make application to join the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (and its related State registered unions where they exist) as a member of the Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association (SOMA), and agree to be bound by its rules and Constitution as amended from time to time.

Title: Ms Miss Mrs Mr

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

D.O.B: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Pcode: _____

Phone: (home) _____

(work) _____

(mobile) _____

Email: _____

Previous Member: Yes No

Employment Status: Permanent Casual Weekly Contract

Method of Payment

Payment may be made in one of the following methods.

Please indicate your preference (choose **ONE ONLY**) with ✓ in the appropriate box

cash/cheque credit card (please indicate your preference below)

one off payment monthly quarterly half-yearly yearly

Credit Card Details:

Bankcard Mastercard Visa Amex Diners

Name of cardholder: _____

Card Number: ____/____/____/____ Expiry Date: __/ __

direct debit financial institution – four weekly deduction only (please complete the PDC form attached)

employer deduction from regular pay (please complete the section below)

Payroll Deduction Authorisation

To the Paymaster:

I wish to authorize payment of my subscription to the Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association to be paid by fortnightly payroll deduction to the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

Signature: _____

Date: __/ __/ __

Please complete this application form and hand it to your SOMA delegate/committee member or mail directly to:

Alliance Membership Centre
Locked Bag 526
Spring Hill QLD 4004

Phone: 1300 65 65 13

Email: members@meaa.aust.com

Internet: <http://www.alliance.org.au>

Alliance membership fees are levied annually by Federal Council in consultation with the SOMA Executive. All membership fees are tax deductible. If you leave the industry and wish to resign your membership, you must do so in writing to your Branch Secretary, in other cases, three months written notice of resignation must be given.