

**Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras
Board Meeting, June 4, 2008,
Wingate Inn, Helena, Montana
Minutes**

President Bill Larson called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM. Also in Attendance: Jan Wolter, Carolyn Valacich, Marty Cowgill, Gordon Johnson, Nancy Lewis, John Zoltek, Alan Satterlee, Allan R. Scott, Tawna Parisot, Mary Williams, Peter Bogy, Jackie Vick, Maggy Lou Perkes, Karen Porter, Sandi Culhane, David Hummel, John Driscoll; Kristin Han Burgoyne, Montana Arts Council; John C. Barsness, MASO staff.

Bill introduced David Hummel, Billings Symphony Treasurer, as a new attendee. He then introduced members of the public: Janny Kirk, president, and Betsy Rivers, executive director as well as violinist, Billings Youth Orchestra. They gave a brief description of the orchestra's recent history and that comprised the public comment period.

Housekeeping: Bill will meet with Music Directors at their break-out to present his idea for a resident composer. Sandi asked why it was a Music Directors' decision alone. Peter said it was just one proposal that had been raised in a previous meeting. Gordon said any proposal would need approval of all seven orchestras; Karen thought the Music Directors would be a logical place to start as the idea would not go anywhere without their buy-in. Carolyn added anyone could bring an idea to the board.

Bill appointed a nominating committee for new officers: Karen, Nancy, and Jackie. He also asked for volunteers to serve on the Volunteer Award committee; Bill will chair, Alan will assist.

Old Business:

Minutes of the January meeting were accepted as submitted.

Financial report through April 30. Nancy outlined the financial statement and answered questions. A question was asked about whether MASO could find out which counties sold MASO license plates. This information could be used to evaluate advertising campaigns. John will ask Department of Revenue for a breakout and report back as soon as that information is in hand.

Certificates of deposit, as previously authorized, will be staggered as they mature. Total invested will be \$60,000 with \$15,000 maturing every three months or so, and the remainder will be kept in a savings account or checking as needed. Investing in higher yield CDs is just prudent use of funds.

Budget for 2008-2009, motion by Alan, Karen second, was accepted with changes as noted (attached).

Wage Survey. After much discussion it was decided past salaries for Music Directors and Executive Directors were available at www.guidestar.org and that other positions among member orchestras were too dissimilar in duties for meaningful comparison; but, if anyone wants to know, they can just pick up the phone and Kristin mentioned “O” net. Therefore Peter thought the issue should just be allowed to die a silent death.

Music Library. Alan said Matthew had done a great job with ordering new music; Gordon will e-mail the list to everyone (see attached). John B. was asked if new purchases had been added since the last update of the Music Catalogue. He responded that each year he e-mails a request to executive directors, who pass it on to their librarians, but few respond with their additions. Since peer pressure seems to work, he was given permission to nag and include in the e-mails which orchestras respond and which do not.

Sandi said her past librarian Jeff was ill with cancer, and a stroke, and to let the other librarians know.

2009 Young Artist Competition. Allan said the date of January 17 is confirmed and that each site has a link to the information on MASO’s site. He also asked everyone to mail additional lists of private teachers to Tawna as soon as possible. The first ad appeared in *Cadenza* magazine’s April edition.

New Business

Membership dues. John B. noted that over the past decade three different orchestras have experienced cash flow problems and have been late paying dues. As that occurrence often happens with non-profit organizations and, although dues are payable upon receipt, it is reasonable to carry a member up to a year in arrears, however two years is questionable and there is neither an incentive to pay dues nor penalty for not paying on time. Part of the problem is all members must report their previous year’s revenue before dues can be calculated and billed. That process takes almost six months. Since each orchestra receives MAC Public Value grants, which now require an IRS 990 for the concurrent fiscal year to be filed with final reports by September 15, it is reasonable to expect each orchestra to report revenue much sooner.

Two-part motion by Nancy, Peter second, with friendly amendments accepted to both:

- 1.) MASO orchestra revenue reports will be provided to the executive director no later than the September MASO meeting.
- 2.) MASO dues invoices will be mailed not later than October 1 and are due and payable by November 15; if not received by that date 10% of the Outreach distribution will be held until payment is received unless prior arrangement is made in writing by November 15. Motion passed unanimously.

Orchestra Reports. Helena, Bozeman, Billings, Butte, Missoula, are attached; Glacier, and Great Falls to follow.

Breakout sessions:

Executive Directors: Sandi reported they talked about un-troglodyte constant contact, libraries, insurance, and general unrest with the structure of MASO's meetings.

Music Directors: Bill reported they talked about his initial proposal for a single resident composer for Montana, but the Music Directors present thought that was not the way to go; they discussed other ideas, but they need more refinement. The seven Music Directors need to sit down together and talk about it before deciding on anything specific. For example, MASO might pursue a special grant to divide among participating orchestras to create a work for that orchestra that will be played by all over a 2-3 year cycle. It will take some money, but not a lot, and would be the first project for all members since the Summer Symphony.

Remaining Board: kicked around several ideas, but decided it would be best to wait for strategic planning and bring them up then.

Strategic Planning:

1. What MASO is doing well:
 - Libraries: music and choral exist and loans are made; MASO committed money to maintain collections as well as make strategic purchases and replacements.
 - Networking at meetings: breakouts and sharing information.
 - Young Artist Competition.
 - Special projects that benefit state: Summer Symphony, National Symphony, and various workshops.
 - MASO is doing well financially plus accessing state grant money and license plate revenue.
 - Board meeting logistics.
 - Member organizations benefit from their involvement.
2. Changes occurring in the field:
 - A softening economy with less individual disposable income.
 - The state's demographics are changing
 - A. The demographic change dictates artistic resources.
 - B. Audience is changing, boomers are graying and younger audience is harder to attract.
 - The role played in educational outreach
 - A. Orchestras are assuming more as schools do less.
 - B. Population is shifting: there are fewer young people to educate.
 - Philanthropy is changing; philanthropic divide deepens.
 - Technology is ahead of our use.
 - Transportation issues for audience, conductors, and musicians.
3. What more can be done?
 - Place a PDF of the music and choral libraries on the Web site.
 - Send Excel copy of libraries to member orchestras each year.

- Not be afraid of going for more state, federal, and private money.
 - Utilize technology (Montana Arts Council training is available)
 - Explore special projects
 - Technical assistance to identify resources (planning, intellectual, financial) that may be of help to struggling organizational members.
 - Remember MASO's core value: we are here to help.
 - Communicate MASO to member boards (a 1 page insert or regular report to board).
 - Allow for more idea exchange.
4. What can and should change?
- More information exchange.
 - Less emphasis on financial report (although a board's fiduciary responsibility is very important to the IRS).
 - Add in-house panels; go back to topic list.
 - Winter meeting could take advantage of technology to meet from home cities instead of driving in dangerous weather to an in-person meeting; therefore, leave the current meeting schedule the way it is.
 - For the next Cultural Trust proposal emphasize Young Artist Competition, and enhance \$3,000 spent for music acquisition for statewide lending library. It was suggested that all orchestras could raise \$1,000 to match young artist Competition and Plum Creek private foundation application. No action was taken on this suggestion.
 - Examine at the September meeting: board meeting on afternoon of day 1 and morning of day 2 with concert in evening; once per year with concert or meet at host site without a concert. The rationale is to move the meeting around the state and learn more about each orchestra's operation. (Update: Volunteer Workshop will be Thursday, September 18, in Bozeman; MASO meeting will be on Friday, September 19, but will begin earlier and end earlier to accommodate return travel.)
 - Within the restructure of the meetings, emphasize the importance that attendees should come away from a meeting feeling their time was well spent. Attendance of non-staff/directors seems to be dwindling and needs to be addressed.
 - Suggested outline for meetings:
 - 10:00 – 11:00 housekeeping/other business
 - 11:00 – 12:00 orchestra reports
 - 12:00 – 12:30 lunch and sharing ideas
 - 12:30 – 2:00 breakouts on a single subject
 - 2:30 - 3:00 report back and close

Meeting adjourned at 3:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John C. Barsness
Executive Director