



Our Players' Voice

From the Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic May 2021

the fort wayne philharmonic players association

On behalf of all musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the immense community support shown at our May Day Rally to Restore Music at the Allen County Courthouse. As we work to reach a fair agreement with Philharmonic management that will bring music back to Northeast Indiana stages, it is important that we all know what is at stake in this moment.

The hundreds of voices heard at the courthouse that day were clear: Fort Wayne loves classical music, and what we bring to our community is tremendously valued. That value is the central issue of our current negotiations with Philharmonic management. Our willingness to accept cuts to accommodate the challenges of the pandemic should not be leveraged into unjustified permanent cuts to our orchestra.

I invite you to sign the letter to the Fort Wayne Philharmonic board and management by clicking <https://www.fwpmusicians.com/signletter>, and let them know just how much the Fort Wayne Philharmonic means to you.

Campbell MacDonald
Principal Clarinet, Fort Wayne Philharmonic
Chair, Fort Wayne Philharmonic Players' Association

SOUNDS OF SUMMER

Come hear the Philharmonic musicians perform light classical and Pops selections FOR FREE!

**Sunday, June 6th at 2:00 pm --
Promenade Park**

**Wednesday, June 9th at 12 noon –
ACPL Library Plaza**

Also, several groups of musicians will perform **Saturday, June 5th from 10 am to noon at the Fort Wayne Farmers Market, McCulloch Park** and also at the **YLNI Farmers Market, Barr & Berry Streets.**

For more information, click:
<https://www.fwpmusicians.com/upcoming-events>

BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

by Diane Dickson
A trustee of AFM Local #58, Diane retired from the Philharmonic after playing 2nd oboe and Solo English horn for 25 years.

On behalf of the Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, I would like to thank all of our friends who came to show support at the recent “May Day Rally to Restore Music to our Region” at the Allen County Courthouse green.

It was also meaningful to receive the support of orchestral colleagues across the country, as represented by John Michael Smith, president of the Regional Players' Association (ROPA) and Paul Austin, president of the International Conference of Symphony

Orchestra Musicians (ICSOM). Together, they represent 145 professional orchestras with 10,000 musicians.

ROPA and ICSOM orchestras have a wide range of operating budgets. But no matter their size, they all faced the same challenges this past year. Both Smith and Austin reported that the majority of orchestras in their conferences found ways to get their musicians through the pandemic, remaining a vital presence through a wealth of online streaming media and Covid-19 safe live performances.

For example, the **Kalamazoo Symphony's** monthly “Final Fridays Digital Concert Hall” performances

streamed their opening nights and made them available on demand to ticket holders. “Musical canons” is a weekly video collaboration between the musicians and music director Julian Kuerti. In this series, viewers frequently caught glimpses into the musicians' daily lockdown routines.

Last fall, the **Toledo Symphony** offered limited in-person audience attendance in a venue where Covid-19 safety protocols could be maintained. The orchestra also launched TAPA Streaming, a service available on Apple TV and Roku devices. Through the streaming services, listeners have the option of purchasing a ticket to watch a live performance or renting a recording of that performance and have access to

it for 30 days. Beyond the pandemic, management sees the new streaming as an opportunity to grow audiences locally and nationally.



The Toledo Symphony and Dayton Philharmonic musicians showing support

Richmond (VA) Symphony: The Richmond Symphony offered both live streamed and in-theater concert experiences. Pioneers in making a live concert experience as safe as possible, their protocols included stringent venue sanitation procedures, mask-wearing requirements and temperature checks of attendees. They allowed more than 6 feet of distance between seats, added more performances to meet demand and shorter concerts without intermission.

Tucson Symphony's "Up Close" series live streamed ensemble performances and musician talks. The orchestra has also constructed a mobile stage for its "TSO On the Go" series that will allow in-person musical performances before limited outdoor audiences. Most notably, the management views their new digital presence as an opportunity to reach out more than ever to the community beyond the pandemic. Other creative examples:

Dayton Philharmonic: The orchestra performed socially distanced in-theater performances of shorter length and no intermissions. Live streaming was made available to patrons who could then view the live performances from the comfort of home.

Austin Symphony: The ASO established a COVID-19 Emergency Fund to contribute financial support to their players, whom they showcased on virtual solo recitals and Musician Q&A on the orchestra's Facebook page. The orchestra welcomed live audiences to their concert venue since 2021, and provided live streaming of those performances.

Columbus (OH) Symphony: Last fall, the CSO conducted 20 free outdoor community concerts, as well as 31 free outreach concerts with limited audiences. They conducted a virtual symphony gala fundraiser, and created dozens of educational, promotional, behind-the-scenes and performance videos for patrons and the public.



A Philharmonic musician at the rally



Paul Austin, the ICSOM President, speaking at the rally

None of the full-time musicians of the Columbus Symphony have suffered any loss of wages or benefits since the pandemic began. Other orchestras with operating budgets similar to Fort Wayne's that have continued to pay 100% of their musicians' wages include the Richmond, Austin, Kalamazoo and Toledo Symphonies.

In stark contrast, the management of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic has silenced its musicians and chosen not to bring their music to the community during the pandemic. All of the orchestras mentioned here are of similar financial size to the Philharmonic. However, none of them have the accumulated wealth that the Philharmonic possesses.

With over \$22 million in its endowment, over \$26 million in net assets, no debt and funding in place to begin construction on a new headquarters, the Philharmonic is strong financially. Yet, the management has viewed the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to demand permanent cuts to musician wages and abandon a Collective Bargaining Agreement that has been built over decades.

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YANA BOURKOVA-MORUNOV
interviewed by Dessie Arnold

Yana Bourkova-Morunov is our Associate Concertmaster, and I interviewed her via email. Her answers trace the musical journey of her life, and will allow you to get to know her. Here is her story:

My parents had a large collection of records, many of which were classical. They say that as a baby I always calmed down to Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. My earliest memories of listening to some of those classical records are coloring while listening to Tchaikovsky *Sleeping Beauty* ballet music, and jumping on the bed to Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from the *Peer Gynt Suite*.

When I was 5 years old, I saw a "pretty lady" (Liana Isakadze) on TV playing the violin and wanted to be just like her. Shortly after beginning studies with my first teacher, Savely Shalman, who is a renowned pedagogue, I started performing at age 6. It was a very stringent and stimulating environment in a specialized music school in St. Petersburg, Russia, right from the start. There were mandatory performances throughout the school year, as well as many extra opportunities. He took me on tours to perform and assist in his master classes starting at age 7.

Music was so much a part of me that deciding to become a professional musician was assumed. Starting at age 7, I was practicing for 3 hours each day, and 4-6 hours by high school. It was just a no brainer after being very successful from very early on in my teacher's studio. The chamber strings orchestra we had in the school was also extremely serious and professionally-oriented. Every student had to practice

as if they were to become professionals, even if they were to change their mind later on.

After moving to the US while in high school, I studied at the Music Institute of Chicago, Oberlin College Conservatory, Northwestern University Bienen School of Music (BM summa cum laude), University of Wisconsin-Madison Mead School of Music (MM cum laude), and other distinguished institutions including the Aspen Festival. I have been very fortunate in having a number of very good teachers.



Yana and her family

The audition process is how musicians win positions in performing organizations. When an orchestra has an opening, they announce it in the union newspaper. The audition committee determines the date, time, place as well as the audition repertoire to be prepared by the candidates. It is at the candidates' own expense to travel and lodge in order to take the audition. Depending on the orchestra, there could be hundreds of applicants for one position. Having enough preparation time, having rested well enough after the trip for the audition, sometimes adjusting for climate changes, having a clear and calm mental state and an

"optimal arousal" state while playing through the repertoire are all very important components to a successful audition. Preparation is the most important of all, of course. I was fortunate enough to get my first full-time job as Assistant Concertmaster in the Richmond Symphony in Virginia on my third audition. It definitely takes a lot of patience and tough and true self-love to get through this ordeal.

The current standoff with the Philharmonic is not the first time Yana and Pavel have been in such a situation: The previous jobs we both won were in the Honolulu Symphony. One thing we learned is that for a full-time orchestra to survive and thrive, there has to be a collective will and effort of both large and small community leaders and donors to sustain and cherish the orchestra, and the absence of any ill will. There was a dysfunction in Honolulu that led to the orchestra's demise, and sadly, it seems like Fort Wayne might be headed in the same direction, if the course is not changed.

Bach, Mahler and Tchaikovsky are my top three favorite composers. Bach's music is just pure heavenly joy and glory. Mahler's music is full of sudden whimsical twists and turns, and the instrumentation and the use of the voices is haunting. Tchaikovsky has the most beautiful melodies. I couldn't just stop at those three though, for me Brahms, Prokofiev and Richard Strauss are right up there with them.

I like the combination of playing as a soloist, with small ensembles, chamber orchestra, full orchestra—all of the above within a given time frame, but with the heavy dominance

of symphonic music. For me, the instrumentation and the richness of the palette of the full orchestra is second to none.

The best part of performing for me is being in the moment and just letting the music flow through me and my instrument into the audience's ears and hearts.



Photographs from the May Day Rally contributed by Bryan Gibson

[On practicing music that YOU want to play]: Having three little princesses, ages 8, 6 and 1, my practice time is precious and I must stay practical. I always have to practice some Bach; however, I am also somewhat of a scales and exercises nerd. Those are tools for making better music with better skills.

Our daughters are definitely music lovers and have displayed musical ability. The older two don't seem to express interest in our instruments, but the baby still might! I would like them to love music throughout their lives and to become knowledgeable enough to enjoy the most complex forms of it. We don't pressure them to learn, but if they will display strong desire to take music studies seriously, we will not discourage them.

[Hobbies?]: My hobby at the moment is sleep.

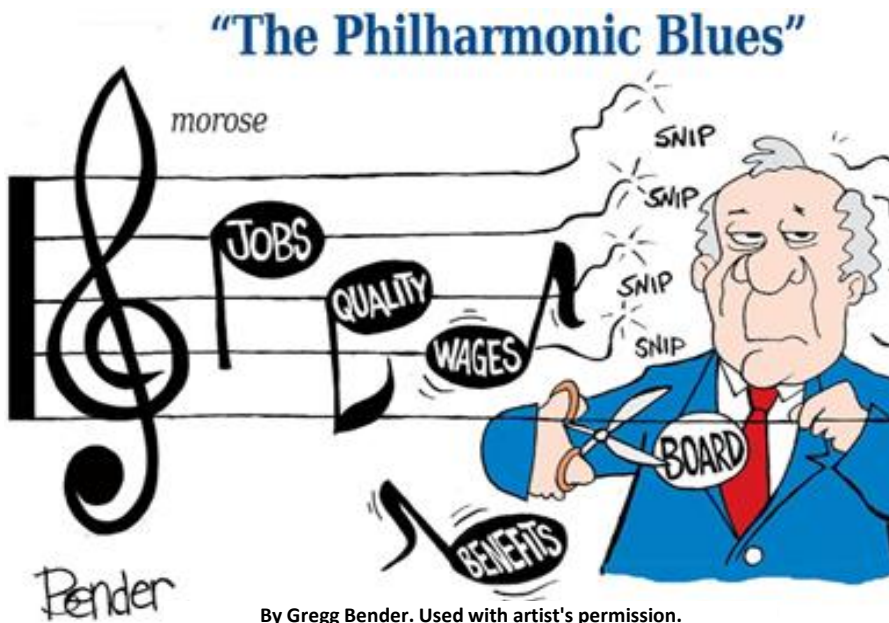
Playing in the Philharmonic is not just a "job," it is a deep inner calling, a way of life and a serious, demanding craft. We are athletes, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

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For so many orchestras, the economic challenges they faced did not hinder them from paying their musicians and serving their communities during these unprecedented times. In his rally address, Paul Austin commented that "most orchestra managers saw this pandemic as a challenge that they faced together with their musicians, instead of an opportunity to take advantage of their musicians."

I encourage anyone who believes that NE Indiana should have a full-time resident orchestra with a leadership that embraces a vision of progress and vitality to contact the Philharmonic board and management.

Go to <https://www.fwpmusicians.com/signletter>, where you can sign a letter and make your views known.



By Gregg Bender. Used with artist's permission.

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