



# RICHMOND MUSICIANS' ASSOCIATION



Local 123, AFM

2016 - D NORTH HAMILTON STREET

RICHMOND, VA 23230

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## November 2019 Newsletter

See the near end of this newsletter about 2020 Dues Notice

Your membership dues are due in January

We are working on updating our website. We are looking for new photographs that we can put up in a variety of pages. If you have some of your group performing or posing, we want to add that onto the website. Send your digital file to David ([secretary@afm123.org](mailto:secretary@afm123.org)).

### **"THE ONE" THAT GOT AWAY**

by Jacquelin Spears

Being a freelance musician and contractor comes with its own type of challenges. A gig can go several ways, but usually ends up going well. Some offer a momentary "uh-oh", but those "uh-oh's" can mostly be handled with flexibility and a sense of humor. But then there is "THE ONE"—the gig that causes the twist in the stomach, the jolting awake in the middle of the night and the acute feelings of indigestion. And as you might guess, "THE ONE" is never a small, local gig with a duo or quartet. Oh no, it's for a traveling show of a nationally, if not internationally, known music star who wants a large number of locally hired union musicians – and they had better be the best Richmond can offer.

For me, "THE ONE" was a recent touring show at the Altria. I was offered the contract to provide fourteen strings, by an entertainment agency from Atlanta. I was delighted to get the opportunity to hire and work with the "crème de la crème", some of Local 123's finest string players.

The agent for the entertainment agency said to send a contract PDQ, with prices for two hours of rehearsal and a three-hour performance, and to go ahead and line up the strings. I immediately emailed a PDF contract for her signature and began hiring. All was going well – I got all the strings quickly, with no schedule conflicts. Then five days went by with no return of the signed contract. I called and was assured by the agent that she was just waiting for return contracts from oth-

er contractors, and did I have my strings for the show? Oh yes, all was good in Richmond. I called twice more, and got firm assurances but increasingly vague excuses. On my third try (and subsequently) she neither answered the phone nor returned my messages. As you might imagine, I was getting truly worried and irritated. Only two weeks before the show would roll into town, and still no contract.

I asked the Secretary of the Local 123 to make a call to the agent on my behalf, which he dutifully did. (Thank you, David Hartley!) He got the same "song and lyrics" from the agent that I did: "Yes the strings are good and yes they will be used". She was saying the right things, but believe me when I say that I was not encouraged. Still no signed contract. I sent two more emails - no answer. Six days before the show I decided to give a last try at calling. To my great surprise the agent answered the phone. After exchanging pleasantries, I inquired if my contract and emails had been received. She deflected, hemmed and hawed, and tried to ignore my questions, but I was like a dog with a bone; she was not going to put me off any longer. I also stated that as a union contractor, I would not provide the strings, and no one was going to play this show without a signed contract in my hand.

It was then that she finally stopped tap dancing and dropped the bomb. "It had been decided" that they

would not be hiring any strings – they would use just the core band that was touring with the artist. This decision had been made the weekend before the show was scheduled to come to Richmond. I was not pleased. Musicians that I like and respect had committed their time and talent on my say-so. I now had to go back and tell them that the gig had evaporated. This had turned into a nightmare. I am so thankful that everyone was gracious about this non-job when I explained what had happened.

Ultimately, and only hours before curtain, the entire show was “postponed due to unforeseen circumstances – new date to be announced later”. The final insult came when I learned the show had been double booked all along. Performances had been scheduled

in both Richmond and Philadelphia for the same date and time. There’s no way of knowing for sure, but my guess is that Philadelphia had sold more tickets than the Richmond venue, so that’s where they went. The unscrupulous agent never gave any hint of the double booking. She never apologized for her unprofessional behavior, neither in failing to promptly return a signed contract, nor in failing to promptly inform me when they cancelled the strings.

So in closing, allow me to allude to lyrics to a song in a show which sum up my experience with this misadventure: “Things are seldom as they seem ...bulls are but inflated frogs.” You know the rest of the song. This seemed like the gig to play, but it turned out to be “THE ONE” that got away.

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### **Local 123 members that have resigned**

Paul Bedell  
Anthony Casamassima  
Dennis Walters  
Steven J. Smith  
Stephen Slater  
Thomas Witten  
Freddy Finn  
Pamela Barton

### **Local 123 members that are suspended for not paying their annual dues**

Justin Bailey  
Carter Blough  
Carlos Chafin, Jr.  
David Jackson  
David Ray  
Charles Rupen  
Richard Stine

### **Local 123 members that are expelled for not paying their annual dues**

Amanda Burton  
Thomas Custalow  
Jared Davis  
Cameron DiNunzio  
Robert Ellithorpe  
James Ferree  
Nicholas Flores  
Stuart Gardner  
Daphne Girling  
David James

American Federation of Musicians National Conference  
and Southern Conference of Locals  
Las Vegas, Nevada

I am a new person to the idea of working with a union and working with our local. One of the big things that I took away from attending this conference is that there are many competent people that are passionate about helping the members to get what they need. They are not working for themselves but instead are giving of their time and energy to secure good conditions and a secure future for musicians in the United States and Canada and even in other areas around the world.

There was much preparation made to organize things to get ready for these events. There were proposals worded for various committees to contemplate and debate before bringing them before the whole group to vote upon. There were inductions of new officers and thanks giving to officers that are moving on to other positions as their term of office ends.

We were given presentations from Jay Blumenthal describing the hard work that was done to secure a permanent office space for the AFM. It was a difficult battle to find a place and building owners changing contracts at the last moment with the end of their lease of their offices looming closer. It turned out that they found they could purchase the whole of the ninth floor in the same building that they had been leasing. They are proud of the space that they have now and feel it is an attractive office for guest to come to. If you find yourself in New York City, they have an invitation open for any of the members to see it for yourselves and have a tour.

I was very impress with the politeness that the delegates showed to one another as they discussed the pros and cons of the various issues that needed to be decided.

Also there was great generosity given. When the Baltimore

Symphony Orchestra presented what was happening and the history that lead up to the lock-out, many delegates speaking on their own behalf and from their local gave hundreds and thousands of dollars in support and solidarity for the musicians of the BSO. Each day there were new delegates that went up to a microphone on the floor with points of personal privilege to make their pledges known.

There were many presentations given that were on the subject of the Pension Fund and how the AFM is working with the federal government to establish a solid path and plan to secure pensions for many years to come. They are urging to congressmen to approve the Butch-Lewis Act that will allow any organizations that manage their own pension funds to secure a solid future through our volatile financial times for every one of us. One thing that the AFM is working hard on is to require royalties and pensions to be paid for the intellectual properties of the musicians for the retransmission of their work that is viewed and listened to from YouTube, video games and other such services. There is a need to recognize the important contribution that musicians provide that goes into what the gen-

eral population consumes as entertainment, especially when others are making many millions in royalties and not sharing the profits.

There was a solemn ceremony was given to recognize delegates that has passed on in the past three years. We submitted the name of Laura Whitely and a rose was placed in an urn for her with live music provided as the names called out. The Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestra provided the music. Besides the recognition of ex-delegates, officers and staff and a list of prominent AFM members and notable musicians who have passed since the last convention. It was great to hear from many different Las Vegas musical groups that provided music in the morning before the meetings got underway and during the lunch breaks.

It was an enlightening six days full of important work.

David Hartley  
Secretary-Treasurer  
AFM, Local 123

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## Vice President's Report

At the end of this past July, I attended the Regional Orchestra Players Association Conference in Boston as an Alternate Delegate, stepping in for Delegate Erin Lano. While there, I attended sessions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday covering a variety of topics pertinent to Regional Orchestras. The roughly 81 member orchestras cover a wide range of budgets, perhaps the biggest being Pacific Symphony at around 14 million. (They will be hosting the conference next year and unfortunately did not send a delegate this year.) Orchestras are required to send a delegate at the Local's expense and the Local pays dues of \$800 per year.

Because we were in the jurisdiction covering Portland, Maine, the Portland Symphony Executive Director gave us an audio-visual presentation detailing the Symphony's struggles and triumphs in the last ten years. They were able to go from 10 years of deficits and a maxed-out line of credit to being in the black for the last 10 years. The Executive Director attributed much of their success to the inclusion and active participation of the musicians in every part of the organization. They found the local population was eager to know more about the players and fund raising increased yearly. Openness between management and musicians at every step was crucial. Though there was nothing particularly new that they had done, her personality and her attitude that the music and musicians are the most important part of the Symphony organization made this Executive Director feel like a breath of fresh air.

The next session was given by an oboist who practices Alexander Technique. She ran us through some exercises to illuminate potential causes of pain due to posture. Most of us had pain of some sort and Alexander seems to be a good way to work on mindfully addressing it.

During Breakout sessions, delegates reported on the state of their orchestras and compared notes. It was noted that issues bothering one orchestra tended to be the same bothering others. Managements seem to be using the same playbook everywhere, from their negotiating practices to the functional or dysfunctional running of the organizations. Much turnover of staff was noticed as well as library and sound and light problems

Ray Hair spoke to us about getting returns proportionate to our level of preparedness. He also stressed that you don't get what you want because they like you and that you have to make them afraid of what you can do to them. He brought up that if you allow pay tiers, management will try to get a deal to use the lowest paid players the most.

Rochelle Skolnick, Director of Symphonic Services and Special Counsel told us the annual report and SSD resources are on the AFM website. She emphasized the need to get CBAs for music festivals such as Grand Tetons, Music in the Mountains and Colorado Music Festival.

Debbie Newmark, Electronic Media specialist, gave a detailed, yet necessarily incomplete report on the new Integrated Media Agreement. The new contract between the Employers' Electronic Media Association and the AFM covers capture and release of live performances of Symphony, Opera and Ballet. It took 18 months of hard bargaining. I have lots of notes on her talk and if anyone would like to know details, I'd be happy to go over it with you.

Labor lawyer, Mel Schwarzwald talked to us about negotiating. He gave very concrete advice on what to do and what not to do before and during negotiations. I'm sure all the AFM negotiators use all the tactics he described, but it was interesting to hear about some of the information we can gather ahead of a negotiation as well as behavior dos and don'ts.

There were two sessions on Organizing. These were helpful in reminding us that we are all the union. There is no us and them in the union. We are not here to do the membership's work, but to help them find answers and work along side them.

Lovie Smith-Wright spoke on Diversity. Mentioned were the AFM Conference Women's Caucus, April Sims of the AFL-CIO, Jennifer Gardner, AFM in-house counsel. There was a wage discrimination case brought by a member of the BSO citing gender discrimination. The president of the Phoenix local mentioned women's freelance issues.

Alfonso Pollard reported on the Butch Lewis Act and CITES. He said the NEA got 167,000,000 and CPB got 450,000,000 despite the current administration's desire to make cuts. He said something about Terrestrial Radio and Sound Exchange, but I didn't catch it.

Jessica Schmidt gave a talk on Diversity and how to increase it. There was discussion about the need to help mentor at the earliest possible moment and the difficulties in doing that.

A woman of color stood and protested the fact that the only image shown at the conference of a person of color was a mugshot of O.J. used to confusing effect by Pat Hollenbeck, President of the Boston Local.

The main takeaway I got from attending the conference, is that we are not alone. Our colleagues are experiencing what we do, both the good and the bad. If we stay unified, we will accomplish more than if we try to go it alone. Symphonies before the union were abused. We've got a lot of contractual rights that were hard won by generations of union members and we need to stay with it. The people in the New York office seemed to really know what they were doing and inspired my confidence.

Anna Rogers

Vice President Local 123

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## President's Report

### Why join the AFM

The reasons for joining the union are as old as the concept of collective bargaining. Beatrice Webb, who worked in industrial relations in Britain, first used the term in 1891. When members come together around an important issue, their strength has a voice which a single voice cannot duplicate. The National Labor Relations Act (1935) and subsequent legislation guaranteed the right of employees to bargain in their collective interests. Unions were founded to achieve better benefits and protections for their members.

### AFM Benefits

The first and primary benefit is a collective bargaining agreement. In any CBA, negotiators attempt to create reasonable rules of work and working conditions at an acceptable level of compensation. Over years of time and various iterations of contracts, the union has developed protections against unfair playing conditions- inadequate lighting, temperature extremes and safety issues and has bargained for increases in compensation. Negotiations for these benefits fall to a negotiating committee elected by their peers and led by a union negotiator who is educated in labor law, current settlements across the country and the rules of bargaining. Other benefits include the following:

1. Credit Cards
2. Equipment Protection Insurance
3. Personal Loans
4. Home Security
5. AT&T discounts
6. Car Rentals
7. Hotel Discounts
8. Restaurant Discounts
9. Dental , Prescription, Hearing, Vision and Retiree Health Insurance
10. Tires
11. Motor Club
12. Insurance—Life, Homeowners, Renters, Auto, Accident and Pet Health Insurance

To summarize, please visit [www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org) for further information.

George Tuckwiller, President

## New Members to Local 123

Dominic Rotella  
1308 Floyd Ave, Apt 1  
Richmond, VA 23220  
(502) 939-3613  
EMAIL: [dominic.rotella@gmail.com](mailto:dominic.rotella@gmail.com)  
INSTRUMENT(S): Horn  
DATE JOINED: 2019-03-31  
Richmond Symphony

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Catherine Broyles  
2425 Old Brick Rd  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
Home Phone: (318) 372-4201  
Email: [ccb2690@gmail.com](mailto:ccb2690@gmail.com)  
Instrument: Flute, Piccolo  
Date Joined: 2019-9-9  
Richmond Symphony

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Tomas Rappaport (David Riddell)  
5100 Caledonia Road  
Richmond, VA 23225  
Home Phone: (804) 231-3047  
Cell Phone: (804) 393-3901  
Email: [rapreport@comcast.net](mailto:rapreport@comcast.net)  
Instrument: Piano  
Date Joined: 2018-6-18

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John Krause  
13000 Farrington Rd.  
Ashland, VA 23005  
PHONE: (804) 496-8643  
EMAIL: [johnkrause195@gmail.com](mailto:johnkrause195@gmail.com)  
INSTRUMENT(S): Double Bass  
DATE JOINED: 2019-03-13

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Samuel Huss  
110 W. Marshall St.  
Richmond, VA 23220  
Home Phone: (989) 600-4168  
Email: [sam.j.huss@gmail.com](mailto:sam.j.huss@gmail.com)  
Instrument: Trumpet  
Date Joined: 2018-10-17  
Richmond Symphony

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Colleen Crafton  
8394 Britewood Circle  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
Home Phone: (804) 343-8094  
Email: [pipesnposaune@gmail.com](mailto:pipesnposaune@gmail.com)  
Instrument: Trombone  
Date Joined: 2018-6-18

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Jeffrey Hudson  
8996 Stywalt Lane  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
PHONE: (804) 726-0801  
EMAIL: [HUDSONJL2@VCU.EDU](mailto:HUDSONJL2@VCU.EDU)  
INSTRUMENT(S): Tuba  
DATE JOINED: 2019-03-01

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Chi Lee (Chi Nemeth)  
3607 Kings Point Ct.  
Richmond, VA 23223  
Home Phone: (817) 688-9267  
Email: [viola790607@hotmail.com](mailto:viola790607@hotmail.com)  
Instrument: Viola  
Date Joined: 2018-10-17  
Richmond Symphony

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Sara Jobin  
20 Overbrook Road  
Richmond, VA 23222  
Phone: (415) 269-7164  
Email: [sarajobin88@gmail.com](mailto:sarajobin88@gmail.com)  
Instrument(s): Conductor, Piano  
Date Joined: 2019-10-08

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Johanna Beaver  
118 Tintern Ct. Apt. 2-F  
Charlottesville, VA 22901  
PHONE: (516) 607-4386  
EMAIL: [johannalouisebeaver@gmail.com](mailto:johannalouisebeaver@gmail.com)  
INSTRUMENT(S): Viola Violin  
DATE JOINED: 2019-02-07  
Afton String Quartet

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Kelly Speiran  
14410 Birnam Woods Dr  
Midlothian, VA 23112  
Home Phone: (804) 350-3957  
Email: [kellyspeiran@gmail.com](mailto:kellyspeiran@gmail.com)  
Instrument: Oboe  
Date Joined: 2018-9-18

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Edward "Eddie" Sundra  
203 W. 31st St.  
Richmond, VA 23225  
Phone: (484) 326-8630  
Email: [efsundra@aol.com](mailto:efsundra@aol.com)  
Instrument(s): Clarinet, Saxophone  
Date Joined: 2019-11-14  
Richmond Symphony

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Daniel Myssyk  
1215 Stanhope Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23227  
Home Phone: (804) 262-3016  
Work Phone: (804) 828-4040  
Cell Phone: (804) 665-4235  
Email: [dmyssyk@vcu.edu](mailto:dmyssyk@vcu.edu)  
Instrument: Conductor  
Date Joined: 2019-4-11  
Richmond Symphony

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James Donley (Jim Donley)  
6345 Blenheim Rd  
Scottsville, VA 24590  
Home Phone: (434) 286-2850  
Cell Phone: (434) 566-7630  
Email: [795music@gmail.com](mailto:795music@gmail.com)  
Website: [jimdonley.com](http://jimdonley.com)  
Instrument: Banjo, Guitar, Dobro, Lap Steel, Percussion  
Date Joined: 2018-7-3

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Karmalita Bawar  
8806 Chippenham Road  
Richmond, VA 23235  
Phone: (804) 560-1012  
Email: [karmalita.bawar@gmail.com](mailto:karmalita.bawar@gmail.com)  
Instrument(s): Piano  
Date Joined: 2019-10-25

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## Notice of 2020 Dues

**Regular Members**—Year in Full: \$136.50  
1<sup>st</sup> Half 2020: \$68.25  
Due by January 31, 2020  
Late Fee: \$5.00 per month after Jan 31st

**Life Members**—Year in Full: \$87.75  
1<sup>st</sup> Half of 2020: \$43.88  
Due by January 31, 2020  
Late Fee: \$5.00 per month after Jan 31st

Please notify the office of your email address as we have had requests to send our newsletter by email rather than postal service. It will save us much in postal fees. You can also state your preference about how you want to receive any newsletter, it can be sent either way.

If you wish to pay your dues online you may do so by going to [www.afm.org](http://www.afm.org).

Also, please report any change in the names, address, phone numbers of the beneficiary information that we have on file for you. You can request a new card to notify of a change in your beneficiary information if you think your situation requires it. Contact the office by email ([secretary@afm123.org](mailto:secretary@afm123.org)) or phone (804-355-6556) to check on things if you are not sure. Even some on the Executive Board recently found that they needed to change their beneficiary info.

Know that when you neglect to pay your dues and yet expect to keep your membership with the Local, we still have to pay the National AFM office the per capita dues on your behalf. If you are a regular member, \$66.00 of your annual dues is sent to the National office divided into four payments paid quarterly. If you are a lifetime member, \$50 is sent to the NYC office paid in four quarterly payments.



Richmond Musicians Association, Local 123  
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Richmond, VA 23230

Nonprofit Organization  
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RICHMOND, VA  
PERMIT #119