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From the Editor's Desk

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Photo by Adrienne Merit, 2008



Jeremy Baguyos in the Recital Hall of the Strauss Performing Arts Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha

By Jeremy C. Baguyos

With recent high-profile cutbacks in the arts making the news, I feel compelled to make some comments before I go on with my usual business as Editor of *Bass World* and *OJBR*. The recession has negatively impacted the professions where bassists exercise their art and make their living. The arts have been through this before, and most artists always seem to come out of it OK. One thing we need to remember is that most media outlets are commercially driven, and as a result, they tend to focus their reports on gloom and doom in order to capture and hold readers' and viewers' interests. Conventional media

outlets tend not to focus on the good news because good news does not grab the public's attention and is not as good for the web analysts' sales and marketing statistics for advertisers. Holly Mulcahy, Concertmaster of Orchestra Iowa and blogger, sums it up best, in her reaction to a *New York Times* article bemoaning the downfall of orchestras when she states "bad news travels faster and more passionately than good . . . there are some very good things going on in the orchestra world that never see the light of day." The bias towards bad news, crisis, and controversy, however, creates the

impression that all is lost and sometimes exacerbates the problem. Fortunately, *Bass World* is part of a non-profit organization, the ISB, so we don't have to resort to the same methods as our for-profit counterparts. And as a side-note, thank you for renewing your membership, since it is your membership that helps make *Bass World* and its optimistic voice possible.

I see *Bass World*, *OJBR*, and *Bass Line* as part of the ISB's arsenal in the preservation and promotion of our art in good times and bad. As a non-profit entity, "the ISB is dedicated to stimulating public interest, improving performance stan-

dards, and to providing an organization for those specializing in the teaching, learning, performing, repairing, making, researching, and enjoyment of the double bass." ISB publications are ongoing documents that communicate the ongoing advocacy for our instrument, the traditions and legacies of our instrument, and the current eclectic activities of our members. I also view the many issues of the ISB journal as a testament to bassists' artistic and professional resiliency. Browse the George Vance Online Resource Library and you will see hundreds of reviews introducing new sheet music and recordings for the double bass, hundreds of columns by esteemed column editors disseminating useful information, and numerous feature articles explaining, analyzing, reporting, promoting, and inspiring the vibrant art of the double bass and all of the contexts within which it has thrived. After many years of all this documentation in the ISB's bass journal, I think it is safe to say that the art of double bass has weathered all the recessions and economic downturns that it has faced over the decades. I am confident that we will climb out of the current recession as well.

I am at once awed by this amazing member-driven organization and inspired and obligated to do what I can to promote the double bass, its traditions, and most



An annual performance event in Omaha organized by Bill Ritchie, students of several studio teachers in Omaha are joined by members of the Omaha Symphony in a performance of bass ensemble music for an enthusiastic audience. (photo courtesy of Bill Ritchie)

importantly, its bassists and all those who write, create, and support them. I would like members to ask themselves what they can do to continue to advocate this great instrument, its traditions, and its bassists. Maybe, it would be more relevant to ask members what they have done to advocate the double bass and its practitioners and to share any innovative successful ideas in an article, especially ideas that contribute to the sustainability of our musical art. No single bassist can change the profession and the arts. But all of us collectively with our collective wisdom, with our collective writings, and with our collective efforts could certainly add to the diverse discourse and the repository of articles and ideas that has been built up in the ISB's journal archives since the first publications. I'm certain potential authors have much more to say and will have many more opportunities to inspire, and I am certain that collectively as a bass society, our instrument, our profession, our organization, our values, and our art can thrive. And remember, it is not pedestrian to share good ideas and good news in an article.

It should go without saying, there is no better way to advance our art than to keep playing the bass, composing for the bass, teaching the bass, and creating for the bass, and aspiring to do these activities well in whatever context we create, perform, and teach. Most importantly, we should never forget the significance of communicating the good news of what we do as bassists in ISB publications and other media outlets and do what we can to let people know that the sky is not falling even if the sky is dark with the clouds hanging low. I'm sure there are bass activities in which we take part that can only remind us that the arts are truly alive and well. I'll share my most recent activity in the picture on the previous page, an annual Omaha event featuring many enthusiastic bass players of all ages and levels.

As we climb out of this current recession and celebrate the continuing and tireless achievements of bassists despite an economic downturn, I look forward to many more decades of "bass love," reading about it in *Bass World* and *OJBR*, and looking back nostalgically at 2011 as yet another quaint year where art and artists triumphed over economic adversity.



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