IAMA Award 2014

At the 24th IAMA International conference gala dinner held this year at LSO St Lukes in the City of London on 12 April 2014, the IAMA award was presented by the Chairman, Aino Turtiainen-Visala (Fazer Artists) and introduced by David Sigall (Ingpen & Williams):

"IAMA has, over many years, given a special award (The IAMA Award) to an individual who has made a truly outstanding contribution to the world of music.

At the 2014 IAMA Conference in London the award was given to Myrna Bustani founder and Artistic Director of the Al Bustan Festival in Beirut, Lebanon.

Mme Bustani founded the Festival in 1994 as the country emerged after 17 years of war and, despite all the difficulties in the region since, has kept the festival going uninterruptedly. As an example of artistic flair, persistence and courage Myrna Bustani has few equals."

Artist management is recognised for the first time in the Queen’s Honours list.

IAMA would like to congratulate Martin Campbell-White and Robert Rattray on their State honour of an MBE for services to music.

In addition to this, Martin received Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society - the first artist manager in its 200 year history. Also receiving an award was IAMA Board member, Janis Susskind and John Cumming, Director of Serious (an Affiliate member company) who both were awarded an OBE.
More than 530 delegates attended the 24th IAMA International Conference in London which was presented together with the Opera and Media day in collaboration with Opera Europa. Held in Milton Court, the brand new Guildhall School of Music and Drama complex opposite the Barbican Centre, it was a unique opportunity to introduce London’s newest concert hall to an international delegation.

Our evaluation following the conference revealed a strong interest in the session entitled, “Sustainability of Artist Management” the subject of which arose out of a membership survey undertaken in February 2014. We think it deserves a spotlight in this newsletter.

The Sustainability of Artist Management:

Session description: Different models of sustaining a business in classical music are a challenge for all - whether the artist management company is large or small. Circumstances have changed, and are changing, through the pressure to take on ever-increasing demands for promoting an artist today, and the administration that accompanies servicing an engagement.

Can the commission model sustain businesses today? What areas may need to be re-discussed, and do we need to be more realistic about what services are practical – and indeed affordable – in today’s business climate, and in the context of the current commission structures that have been operating in recent years.

Moderator: Evans Mirageas, The Harty T. Wilks Artistic Director, Cincinnati Opera, Vice-President for Artistic Planning, The Atlanta Symphony

Speakers: Elaine Lipcan, Manager, Artists & Attractions, Opus 3 Artists; David Sigall, Director, Ingpen & Williams; Sonia Simmenauer, Director, Impresariat Simmenauer GmbH.

Survey Question 1: Name one threat you consider being the greatest to sustainability of the artist management business?

- Time required to service a
- Decreasing or static fees
- Changing service models
- Too many artists for
- Other (please specify)
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Comments from the panel:

Elaine Lipcan (EL): Presenters in the US are becoming far more eclectic in their programming and the slots for classical music become fewer. This decrease in opportunity could be a threat but it also implies that artist managers have to become far more inventive on how to present the art form to an audience, along with the presenters. There is also a threat that people now being appointed as artistic decision makers might have no idea about artists apart from the famous names.

Sonia Simmenauer (SS): The greatest threat is the professionalism of artist managements and lack of quality advice and knowledge. There should be recognition for local expertise and knowledge of the market which is where local managements play a crucial role. Europe is a very diverse area so how can somebody know about all the opportunities available?

David Sigall (DS): The threat is artist managements unless we understand that we exist because we are needed and respond to what we perceive to be the artists’ need. If we do not recognise this fact, we don’t fulfil our task. On the question whether technology is a threat, it’s not. That’s just a means to achieve a practical outcome but artist management goes way beyond just a process.

Comment from the floor: Jasper Parrott, HarrisonParrott: Our mission is to try and empower the artist to achieve their aspirations and try to support their talents. How does one help the artist achieve what they wish within their parameters which they are able to set for themselves?

Survey Question 2: Do you think the present commission model will be enough to sustain your business in future?

Comments from the panel:

EL: This is not a new question and it has always been asked. My perspective is that it is an expanding market, particularly a place like New York. It’s about how you get to an audience irrespective of circumstances or political will. Content is the key problem – who owns it and has direct access to the consumer? This has far more importance for the future than the present business model. You have to be in control of the full process to the buyer of the music and artist management today has not adapted to this necessary connection. In the United Sates, sport has already focussed on this approach and I think it is a business model for the future for classical music.

SS: It is about the content and that depends on the promoter and the interface of the artist management that will sustain the business in the end.

Evans Mirageas (EM): Is it not the issue of time that it takes these days to obtain and service an engagement and what about the added burden of promotion though new technologies?

DS: It is about the individual service you provide to the artist. For example, some artists are very media savvy, take control of their online profile and then there are those who are not good at it. There needs to be responsibility from the artist to also take control of their own lives. Technology is not the real time consumer in the end.

Comment from the floor:

Brian Goldstein, GG Arts Law: There are definite time issues – not just including marketing. Artist managements are having to assume more responsibility so one has to work more realistically to make it sustainable. One should analyse one’s time so that it is not swallowed up by non-strategic activities.

EL: It’s unfair that one company is expected to do everything for the artist - it’s too much - creative partnerships have to be a more realistic option. This might entail service participation from several partners with the artist in control of the parts but not just artist manager doing everything.

EM: But, what about the young artist with a small management investing a lot of time with limited resources – what do they do?

EL: It’s the younger artist that is requiring this level of participation by specialists – the older artists already have things in place.

SS: The artist balance of the portfolio is essential - those paying larger commissions will carry some of the expenditure of the younger artists who are more expensive.

Comment from the floor:

Stephen Wright, International Classical Artists: Specialist participation offers a fair business model and an artist manager might not be able to do it all yet the artist will still hold their manager to account. Therin lies the problem with this model.

EM: Do we charge more?

DS: “One size fits all” artist management does not exist – so it’s the wrong question. Rather it’s about tailoring services to the artists and that can vary greatly. Sonia’s point about a balanced portfolio is an important one and important to financial sustainability.
SS: Markets matter too. Very few string quartets can make a living completely from a concert schedule but the artists need to be creative about what else they can do.

Survey Question 3: Do you expect to change your level of commission in the future?

Comments from the panel:

EM: Are we at the maximum commission?

EL: It’s not that. The reality is that it is a dynamic business with different commission levels and different approaches to each artist. We have a fear within the sector that we will lose artists if we take a step of charging for different services.

DS: Artist managers need to make sure terms of agreement are clear to the artist from the outset of the relationship such as: what will the management do for the artist and what levels of commission and services can be offered?

EM: Who pays for something like a visa service when some cases take an excessive number of hours to resolve? We all have stories that demonstrate that one goes the extra mile but this is hardly recognised in the grand scheme of things and perhaps not the artist either?

Comments from the floor:

Brian Goldstein. If one kept a track of hours vs commission, there would be clear evidence that the commission model is far less expensive to the artist than the hour count and sometimes this evidence is useful to have to hand. One also has to analyse one’s use of time pragmatically – perhaps a specialist partner is required who is cheaper to incorporate in the over strategy to gain more opportunity to attend to the real business of artist management.

Bill Nerenberg, Chesapeake International Artists: Sometimes one needs to make an honest assessment of time and be realistic about how much time and effort is required to service a problem. Some US managements are charging a retainee to balance their books which is not a positive development.

Mark Wingate, Smith & Williamson: A contract is an extremely important document and sets out the expectations in a relationship. It may be realistic to charge for services in-house too.

Survey Question 4: Do you think developments in technology might undermine the artist managers’ role?

Comments from the floor:

Helen Sykes, Helen Sykes Artists’ Management: A problem in the sector are pencilled dates when things are planned well in advance - a lot of time is wasted in those exchanges before it is confirmed and e-mail has made us more casual about professional exchanges. Often the answers are not satisfactory from the respondent and this means that even more effort is required to get decisions.

Comments from the panel:

EM: What about picking up the phone?

EL: I agree. Training younger artists to understand what makes life more efficient and responsible within the context of a contractual agreement should be important to the profession.

SS: Texting brings misunderstandings but agents need to be more detailed too. These days, the artists sometimes expects the manager to be more like a pop manager – to be a servant of the artist but the truth is what confidence do we have to tolerate such demands? Our job is to influence and have conversations with the promoter and artist.

Survey Question 5: Do you levy charges outside commission income?

A final comment from the panel:

DS: There is an element of fear about the artist leaving which touches on the intimate relationship we have with the artist. If trust doesn’t exist then it is simply a commercial arrangement. There is, however, give and take / bad and good times which all play into an artist’s life and the manager’s holistic view about who the artist is and what they need. We shouldn’t be afraid to use words like passion and love in the context of our work because we have to ask ourselves what brings us into the profession in the first place? Without a profound understanding of this circumstance we can’t fulfil our jobs properly.
Our post conference evaluation revealed the following:

**Q:** About Milton Court: We appreciate the difficulty of many levels and pressure on meeting space, but what other aspects of the venue worked for you or not?

**ANS:** Delegates volunteered many responses: They liked: quieter space of Milton Court; direct sunlight into the foyer areas; public transport access but did not like the meeting point area – too difficult; stairs and levels of the complex

**Meaning:** Not much we can do about the physical areas but next time we will look into alternatives for the meeting point and associated studio space in the lower areas of the hall. They were not available this time round.

**72% of delegates believed the conference improved their business potential**

**Q:** On average a delegate attends at least one seminar session over a conference. Considering the conference dates 10-12 April, how many sessions did you attend?

**ANS:** Over 50% attended only one session with a further 16% attending two sessions

**Meaning:** The rate of attendance is consistent with the past but releasing the on-line audio tracks for members on the IAMA website has allowed more to take up the opportunity to learn.

**Q:** Regardless of whether you attended the session or not, which session was most interesting?

**ANS:** Of greatest interest was the panel session on the sustainability of artist management which we urge members to listen to on-line. Peer-to-peer meetings rated highly (32%) with Media and Artist Career Development at 18%.

**Meaning:** Peer-to-peer sessions are here to stay. Your views are welcome as to what topics we should address in future.

**Q:** If we were to reduce registration costs, what would you be prepared to sacrifice?

**ANS:** 51% felt that the gala dinner is an unnecessary expense if it meant cheaper attendance costs.

**Meaning:** The comments are noted and the board will probably consider other options in future. Keeping delegates together for a social is probably a priority but formal sit-down dinners might be a thing of the past.

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**Comments from delegates:**

“I like the current balance of meetings, events, music and freeform ability to meet colleagues.”

Evans Mirageas, The Harty T. Wilks Artistic Director, Cincinnati Opera, Vice-President for Artistic Planning, The Atlanta Symphony

“I think it works very well, and it is up to us to get the most out of the time. I loved it!”

Tatjana Kandel, DR Kultur.

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www.iamaworld.com
Professional Coaching

The Culture of Coaching

The rise of coaching for professionals both seasoned and new is a growing trend. Issues of confidentiality and honesty can be a retarding factor in selecting one's personal coach but those who have undertaken the process have reported positive outcomes to us. Bear in mind that this is not the IAMA mentorship scheme we offer to new and old companies. Here we look at a more personal, goal-orientated focus on the person electing to reprioritise and assess perspectives. We asked Trudy Wright, who is one of several we know doing the work, to map her experience in her career change.

I wonder how you would answer the following questions:

1. Are you interested in achieving more in your personal and professional life?
2. Would you value the time to stand back and consider the bigger picture?
3. Is there something you’ve always wanted to do but have never got round to doing?

More about your answers later... At the beginning of 2012, after almost 25 years working as a music agent, I felt a compelling need to radically re-structure my working life. The problem was that I didn’t know how to achieve this. My situation felt complicated for two reasons, firstly I still loved the essence of the work I was doing. Music has always been my passion, so working with world-class artists and orchestras was, quite literally, a dream come true and, secondly, I was the principal income generator in my family, so there were financial considerations. But the gruelling international travel, which had felt like such an exciting adventure for so many years, was now considerably less appealing and I just wasn't able to reconcile this in the longer-term alongside the family life I had envisaged for myself.

My other passion is people, and so I began to research the business of executive coaching – initially with some scepticism, I must confess – but the more I read about the subject and met with both coaches and clients, the more I became convinced about its potential and benefits. I also hired a coach for myself and, much to my surprise (again!), I saw tangible results, including a greater understanding of what was really important for me; clarifying what I wanted from the next 20 years of my working life and taking control to shape it accordingly and working through challenging problems to find viable solutions. I really looked forward to the one hour sessions every other week which gave me much needed time and space to reflect on a particular topic or issue of my choice. Encouraged by my coach, I dug deeper, explored further and challenged myself more.

At the same time I undertook 18 months of rigorous training in Co-Active Coaching (with the respected American school, the Coaches Training Institute) including their 6 month Certification programme and having coached almost 20 clients - individuals and corporate - ranging in duration from 4 months to over a year, I have found it immensely satisfying to witness the benefits of coaching over and over again. Co-Active Coaches believe that “people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole” which is a very empowering starting point. Clients gain in confidence and authority as they develop their ability to think much more deeply about problems and find their own creative solutions; they begin to see situations from new angles which brings a new, heightened sense of awareness; they gain clarity and insight in order to make better decisions and they start to become aware of their own self-limiting beliefs.

As I went through my training, I became convinced that executive/personal coaching could fill a gap in the classical music industry, where many of us come from music or language backgrounds with little formal training in management and personnel issues. Musicians and sportsmen have coaches to help them become elite performers, so why wouldn’t anyone serious about their life and work benefit from having someone to help, challenge, encourage, motivate and give feedback in order to operate at their very best? Also the idea of using my new coaching skills in an industry I know and love felt instinctively right. So far the signs are encouraging, with colleagues such as Gill Graham, the enlightened European Promotion Director at Music Sales Group, inviting me to work with her and her department. We agreed on a number of fixed-term programmes for individual coaching and I also devised and delivered a one day workshop for the whole team based on Vision, Values and Mission and Team Building. Since then I’ve gone on to work with music executives and managers across the sector in orchestras, PR and music agencies.

I also observed that coaching had the potential to bring huge benefits to artists. Having spent 25 intensive years on the road with conductors, soloists and orchestras, I have seen first-hand the demands and pressure which artists face in the 21st century. I’m now building a client list of young instrumentalists and I’d love to extend this to more established artists too. I strongly believe that having a personal coach – who has no agenda other than the client’s own - would help artists to better clarify their own ambitions and desires (i.e. what’s really important for them), identify much sooner if they’re over-stretching themselves, notice when logistical challenges are impacting too much on artistic challenges and create greater self-awareness and interpersonal skills.

The majority of personal coaching is given on a one-to-one basis and confidentiality is essential for coaching to succeed - indeed, the clients named in this article have given their prior permission. Coaching can be done either face-to-face or, with equally good results, over the phone/Skype, accommodating busy schedules and international life-styles.

Trudy Wright's extensive international experience and cross-cultural understanding informs her consultancy work and her coaching. She spent her childhood years growing up in Peru, the USA and the UK. After graduating from Trinity College of Music (now Trinity Laban) Trudy began a career in artist management, but soon discovered that orchestras were her real passion.

She joined HarrisonParrott, one of Europe’s leading classical music agencies, in 1992 and ended up heading the Tours & Projects division. She has arranged and overseen hundreds of tours worldwide, including to Asia, the USA, South America, Europe and Africa. In 2012 Trudy re-trained as an executive and personal coach and she launched her own coaching practice and music consultancy in January 2014.

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Mobile: +44 7974 084310
IAMA Services

Following the conference comments on issues that take up more time than they should, the Association aims to facilitate better improvements across a range of issues. Sometimes members telephone us about their concerns but based on the e-mail request, here are some statistics you might find interesting.

As pointed out by members, a single problem can take hours to solve others can be handled quite quickly.

In the last five months based on e-mail exchanges:

- Contractual advice and matters concerning the Code of Practice: 11 cases
- Urgent Interventions on immigration: 10 cases
- General Immigration advice: 19 cases
- Assisting members with getting payment settlement: 6 cases
- Legal advice: 8 cases
- Taxation issues: 8 cases
- Assistance with artists changing agencies: 4 cases

On any one day, there are around 20 disputed artist representations which sometimes take days or weeks to settle. Members are encouraged to keep www.ClassicalMusicArtists.com updated as a new website will be launched before the end of Summer.

The following points are primary issues for the Association:

1. Importation and export: CITES/Ivory and precious materials in (Focus at the members’ meeting 29 September)
2. EU consultation on the mobility of artists: tax and social security
3. UK Copyright issues – use of quotations and fair dealing
4. Instruments on aircraft
5. Contractual clauses that challenge suitability judgements
6. Termination of a contract: Timescales and fairness

Dates for your Diary

2014

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<td>KD Schmid Offices, Berlin</td>
<td>Membership drinks</td>
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<td>17 September</td>
<td>IAMA Office, London</td>
<td>Opera Forum Meeting</td>
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<td>29 September</td>
<td>Smith &amp; Williamson offices, London</td>
<td>Seminar - Marketing Artists in the Digital Age</td>
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<td>29 September</td>
<td>Smith &amp; Williamson offices, London</td>
<td>IAMA Members Meeting</td>
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<td>October date tbc</td>
<td>IAMA Office, London</td>
<td>Media &amp; Broadcasting Committee meeting</td>
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<td>03 November</td>
<td>Finnish Institute, Berlin</td>
<td>Conference launch and members’ drinks</td>
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<td>17-22 November</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal</td>
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<td>28 November</td>
<td>Venue tbc, London</td>
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2015

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<tr>
<td>23 – 25 April</td>
<td>Finlandia Hall, Helsinki</td>
<td>25th IAMA International Conference “In from the Margins” - Chairman,</td>
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<td>Aleks Malmberg, Helsinki Festival.</td>
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<td>25 April</td>
<td>Helsinki</td>
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www.IAMAworld.com/events-diary.aspx
Overview of Brazilian classical market

The Brazilian classical market has grown a lot in the last fifteen years, mainly due to public and private investments in symphony orchestras, music for change programs and building/renovation of halls.

The sector, however, doesn’t keep track of its data, neither in terms of money or audience attendance so it’s very hard to quantify the growth. Some organisations do measure and analyse their own results every year but they keep it in house and don’t share. But we can take the number of concerts offered in Rio as an example of how the scenario got better.

Twenty years ago, in November 1994, the first issue of my magazine, VivaMusical, listed 51 concerts. This month, May 2014 there were 304 classical music events in Rio alone. If you consider Sao Paulo, figures are higher because it is the richest place in Brazil (one third of the wealth of the country is produced there) so it is the biggest market for everything, classical music included.

Orchestras, festivals, music education, opera, social projects - everywhere you look in Sao Paulo, the statistic rises. Not only do the State and the city governments in Sao Paulo invest a lot of money in classical music but also most of the private companies that sponsor the arts are based there too. Audiences in Sao Paulo are encouragingly younger than anywhere in the country. Rio has a good classical scene but the local government doesn’t invest that much money and there are fewer sponsors for the arts. The city of Belo Horizonte is the third market for classical music. It has grown consistently in the last few years because of a new orchestra and a symphony hall about to open. Another dozen cities or so have the average classical ecosystem: music schools, conservatories, higher education, a professional symphony orchestra, a venue with good acoustics and local presenters but coverage by general media is never very good and this brings me to the second point of the presentation.

Overview of classical media in Brazil - traditional/digital

The classical sector doesn’t get good press coverage in general but in Brazil, considering the growth we have had, the situation is improving. There are just two players in specialized media. VivaMusical! in Rio (producing content for print, digital and radio) and a monthly printed magazine in Sao Paulo named Concerto. Music critics are concentrated in two newspapers in Sao Paulo and in Rio, just one newspaper covers classical.

As for television, Sao Paulo, Rio and Belo Horizonte have local public stations with weekly programmes focused on classical music and usually partnering local orchestras and venues. There is one cable channel for the arts and then we have FM stations in San Paulo and Rio. Brazilians spend on average 3 hours and forty minutes on-line daily and are top users of social media. There are more mobile phones in the country than inhabitants – for a population of 200 million there are 270 million cell phones. In such context, new media could have provided better access for classical music, but few initiatives really count.

Music institutions do the digital basics: a bit of email promotion, some online advertising but there are very few apps. Facebook is the favourite social platform of classical organisations and YouTube is very big in Brazil but not for classical institutions. If one is to look at the statistics, the top 3 orchestras in the country have less than a thousand YouTube subscribers each.

Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra, the most important musical institution in the country, stands out in the digital scenario. They began webcasting live concerts in 2011 but just one concert then. This season they are webcasting seven concerts. Their best results of simultaneous streaming in a transmission were 4130 and a total of 13,477 unique users.

Last but not least, a few words about my company, VivaMusical! is an information service for the Brazilian classical music industry and also for the music lovers, producing print, digital and radio content. We have also organised a few but significant live events that challenge the status quo of classical music such as including composer Villa-Lobos in the street carnival of Rio and a national tour in nightclubs of an oboe quartet.

For the general public of music lovers, I’ve been publishing a monthly magazine for twelve years now that lists classical events in Rio and a circulation of twenty thousand copies every month. Please contact me whenever you need information on the Brazilian classical industry, I will be glad to help you understand the dynamics of our country and connect you to the best partners.

Heloisa Fischer
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Experiences of Brazil

Peter Ansell, Director/Head of Tours & Projects, Intermusica has submitted his own experience on touring Brazil.

My first visit to Brazil was in April 2001, touring the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sir Andrew Davis (or ‘SAD’ as he quaintly appeared in the tour schedule) and the wonderful Leif Ove Andsnes. We arrived into a blazing São Paulo morning, a vast metropolis. I had no grasp of, and were whisked in air conditioned coolness to the Hilton downtown. Thousands of pounds worth of Brazilian Reals were laid in brown envelopes on a table in the foyer and I managed to catch a glimpse of the breakfast table in the restaurant which groaned under a mountain of carved tropical fruit. Within an hour, the temperature outside was pushing 40 degrees, the senior stage manager had been robbed of his per diems in a market around the back of the hotel, and I had a caipirinha in front of me. Welcome to Brazil.

The tour visited São Paulo, Rio, Montevideo, Rosario and Buenos Aires, the São Paulo and Argentinian portions being shared between the Mozarteums in the days when they used to collaborate. Negotiations had been protracted and I recall pre-tour sleepless nights worrying about freight issues but there comes a time in every tour where you’ve just got to get on a plane and deal with whatever’s going to be thrown at you. The hall in São Paulo, the Sala Sao Paulo, was a revelation – a disused railway station once the terminus for tonnes of Amazonian coffee beans turned into a state of the art(ec) concert hall. With its majestic corinthian columns and adjustable acoustic panels on the ceiling, the hall contrasted starkly with its slum area location.

The unexpected is everywhere in Brazil. It wasn’t until Rio that the fun began though. The Teatro Municipal backstage staff told us there was no air conditioning installed, so we would all have to sweat it out. Then after the rehearsal, magically, air conditioning was switched on which was bliss for the musicians, hell for the sensitive radio crew equipment and a total disaster for the piano. Unfortunately we were told that the piano tuner could not be recalled as he had apparently ‘left the country’. New tuner found, concert delay of 30 mins and I then had to trawl the dark streets of Rio during the first half for SAD’s egg sandwiches.

The free day in Rio brought the obligatory helicopter ride around Christ the Redeemer – a highlight of the tour for me – and then it was time to leave for Argentina. It felt as if the further South you travelled on the continent, the less tropical it felt and by the time we got to Buenos Aires we almost thought we were back in old Europe.

Touring Brazil was an incredible, stressful and life changing experience accompanied by glorious music making, fascinating people and the world’s best grilled meat, carved from swords. It was a tour I will never forget.

From Richard Savage, Specialised Travel

We were involved with the BBC Symphony’s tour referred to by Peter Ansell above and our experiences then encapsulate many of the travel issues which face the organisers of tours to Brazil and South America even today.

There is still a shortage of capacity on many internal routes which can result in large orchestras having to be spread over up to 3 different flights on journeys such as Rio to São Paulo or v-v. For other internal sectors, chartering is often the only practicable solution but again, there is often a very limited choice of equipment. For the BBCSO we were obliged to charter a 737 from the ‘National Carrier’ for one tricky sector - at the time, that airline only had a total of 2 aircraft!

Travelling between South America and Europe would appear to be an easier problem but the introduction of 4-class configurations on many planes has actually led a reduction in the total number of economy seats available. For larger groups - symphonic size - it is again often necessary to split the total party on to 2 flights and to use a combination of carriers. BA has just used some newly vacated slots at Heathrow to increase service to São Paulo which is one of their most successful and profitable routes. They have expressed the desire to put an A380 on the route which would help capacity issues greatly but, at the moment, the Brazilian airport is not equipped to handle the super Jumbo. (continued overleaf)"
DOING BUSINESS IN BRAZIL – A PRIMER IN CONFUSION

by Bill Nerenberg,
Chesapeake International Artists

As we have seen increasing shrinkage in the US marketplace for classical artists and orchestras and even opera performance, one inevitable pathway to continued success has become the international classical music scene with its attendant complications of language, culture, custom and finance.

While the onset of the use of the Euro has meant a significant simplification of at least the financial picture, there are other obstacles to smooth business procedures which have cropped up in some countries to present potentially new barriers for managers and artists.

Brazil, an intriguing and beautiful country with endless miles of some of the most fertile and productive land in the world, with sophistications that challenge the imagination, has come of age in the last 25 years. In terms of general economic activity, here’s a capsule of the relative sizes of a few countries we all know – the World Bank, the International monetary Fund, the United Nations and the CIA World Factbook all declared Brazil to have the 7th largest economy in the world in 2012. It’s a horserace between France (#5) at $2.6 trillion US, the UK at $2.4 trillion and Brazil whose 2012 total was $2.2 trillion US. This placed Brazil ahead of Russia (#8).

As with most rapidly growing economies, the new presence of “disposable income” offers consumers a chance to seek entertainment not previously affordable, and fortunately, classical music does well in many of these growing countries. Another interesting factor is climate – since Brazil is in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons lie opposite those of North America, much of Asia and Europe. The prospect of year-round concert seasons is a tempting target indeed for many managers and artists who normally live and work in the Northern Hemisphere.

Our company is small and relatively new although our personnel are not. Our first call from Brazil was from a conductor who wanted to bring our violinist in as a soloist with his nationally-known orchestra. Our client had already appeared at a number of lower level festivals and schools, basically via arrangements he had made with friends. Complicating this invitation was its lateness as some orchestras in Brazil seem to wait until the last minute to book soloists. This required displacement of some engagements in America for us, but we were able to juggle these obstacles.

Next, we were told that we would have to hire an agent in Brazil. Not being terribly familiar with the marketplace, we asked the conductor for a recommendation. Fortunately for us, he recommended an upstanding fellow whose mother happens to represent most of Brazil’s prominent classical artists. Through this agent, we were able to procure contracts, signatures and payment, but the contracts weren’t done until barely two weeks before the engagement and the payment was delayed by at least two to three weeks past the engagement. It was cumbersome, it was time-consuming, it was at times maddening, but it ultimately worked. I have no doubt that a lesser agent or company in Brazil would not have done the same quality job.

Last summer, we were contacted by a “tour” company in Brazil which represented that they were authorised by a major university where my client had performed in previous years to make an offer for a two-week teaching and performing engagement for my violinist, whose name by now had been getting around the country in a very favourable light. The offer was a good one and the event was being presented at a reputable higher education institution. We checked our schedules and determined that we would have to give up a few obligations in the US in order to take the Brazilian invitation; that seemed to be not a problem as the money from Brazil more than made up for our loss of US revenue.

Needless to say, there was no English translation of the contract, so we asked for a translation and got a very poor one from the company. The gist of the agreement is that you grant exclusive rights of representation. And it was for a much longer period than that of the event. The intricacies got worse as time passed with the eventual result that we had to pull out of the tour and reconstitute the artist’s domestic schedule. The result being that we are extremely cautious in our dealings now, but the largest frustration is in not having a defined pathway to follow for artistic engagements in this fast-growing and promising new economic giant. It would help us all to work for a simplified and direct way to work with the entities who are the event sponsors instead of middlemen who apparently operate on a speculative basis as opposed to an authorised course.
Vienna Seminar Report

Vienna Seminar - "Labels, PR and Artist Managers - New Ways of Working Together"

On 16 May, a seminar presented by IAMA was held at the famous Café Prückel in Vienna.

The intention of this meeting was to improve communication and find new ways of collaborating between labels, PR companies and artist managers. This included examining case studies, discussing practical realities and how the needs and requirements of all parties could be involved and looked after. Participation and turnout at this seminar was so good that for the first time we had to close registration for non-members two weeks prior to the seminar. Organised by IAMA’s Honorary Treasurer, Christian May (MELOS KONZERTE), the participants and invited guests included artist managers, PR specialists as well as record label managers.

Klaus Heymann (NAXOS), Robert von Bahr (BIS), Christiane Delank (ORFEO), Simon Perry (HYPERION), Werner Dabringhaus (MDG), Ludger Böckenhoff (AUDITE), Oliver Wazola (SONY MUSIC)… to name but a few, joined forces with PR managers like Jantje Röller, Maren Borchers, Sabine Mühlberg, Claudia Kapsamer - sitting down together and talking about what can be done to improve communication and collaboration between the various parties.

Following an introductory statement from an artist manager, Helga Machreich; a label manager, Andreas von Imhoff and a PR director, Jantje Röller, there was a robust, two-hour debate unpicking some of the issues surrounding labels, public relations and artist managements.

Questions were discussed such as: who has the say when there are differences of opinion between partners and whether an artist management can play a constructive role? What does the industry (media/labels) expect from artists and of artist managements today? Who is in the driving seat for an effective media strategy and above all, who pays for PR?

Jantje Röller gave a concrete example of the partnership role explaining that for Marin Alsop and the Sao Paulo Symphony, for which they handled both European tours, Albion Media raised their profile by identifying as many different stories around them as possible in order to get a broad spread of coverage in different media. To maintain profile inbetween tours, they were able to use their recording cycle of Prokofiev symphonies on Naxos. "At first, Naxos wanted us to buy the CDs but after meeting with them we were able to establish a working relationship that was based on trust and mutual interest. The result was that Naxos paid for adverts to be placed and we delivered a wide range of press coverage for them."

Quite often, the media and record labels expect more input from artist managements and vice versa. In this context, communication is absolutely essential. For example: some labels see the task of an artist manager as that of a project manager - somebody who brings everything together and leads on the project. Others see artist managers simply as those providing CVs and photos whereas the artist manager’s view is that there is the need to receive more information concerning release dates, future recording projects and more attention concerning the different planning periods. The role of PR agencies in this context is to develop marketing strategies involving managers and labels alike and telling and coordinating "stories" which, it was agreed, have to be authentic. Maren Borchers made the point that it was hard work to coordinate different schedules especially since artist managements usually plan a long time ahead whereas labels plan for the short term. If, however, communication took place at an earlier stage, tours and release dates could be successfully coordinated and combined with a more effective media strategy.

Oliver Wazola (SONY MUSIC) pointed out that this is possible and that there are quite a few positive examples where this has happened and still happens.

The simple fact that agencies, labels and PR were sitting together at an IAMA seminar, discussing their needs, was seen by all as a very positive step forward. What emerged as the main point was that there is a real need for more communication at an early stage to coordinate various strategies, efforts, release dates and tour schedules to really become more effective.

There was widespread agreement that the conversations were important to continue in the future and IAMA wishes to thank all those involved and in particular, IAMA board member, Christian May.

Ashley to leave IAMA

After nearly seven years of first-class work for the members, Ashley has decided to move on to new challenges with an appointment as General Manager of the Newbury Spring Festival. We would like to thank him for his sterling dedication and work over this time and we will all miss him greatly. Hopefully, we see him at the members’ meeting on 29 September at 16:00 so do come along if you can to wish him well in person.
Welcome to New Members
Since the last newsletter we have the following members to welcome:

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Formed over thirty years ago and considered one of the ten best orchestras in the world, the Budapest Festival Orchestra is a success story of Hungary’s musical life. One key to this success is musical director Iván Fischer, who was one of the founders along with Zoltán Kocsis.

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The IMZ is the global association for all those involved in any aspect of audio-visual music and dance. Its 130+ members include broadcasters; performing arts companies and venues; programme producers and distributors; record and DVD labels; cinema and new media specialists.

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