

## Closing Session

June 3, 2022

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SIMON WOODS: Okay, can I have your attention please? This crowd is tough to control. Okay. I'm going to get a bit more stronger now. Can we have some quiet please because I want to get this going? Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And by the way, I appreciate that energy so much. What just happened there is, like, symbolic of this conference. Like that-- I can't remember a league conference with that energy that we've had this week. It has just been absolutely fantastic. So, thank you all for being here.

And now we're at the closing session and we've still got some important things to do and some inspiration to come. But first of all, I want to say thank you to the LA Phil for an amazing concert last night. You've got to hand it to the LA Phil, a new piece by a Latina composer. A 21st century gem brought to life in a new way by a fantastic Black artist. A masterpiece of 20th century American music that's now finding its rightful place in the repertory. And a drag cabaret. I mean, that was-- you know, that's contemporary thinking. We really appreciate everybody from the LA Phil who's here today. We really appreciate everything you did to give us a great night last night. Thank you very, very much.

So, today's closing session is co-sponsored by Akustiks, LLC, HGA Architects, and Schuler Shook. These three well-known and respected architecture, acoustics, and theatre planning firms were recently tapped for a major renovation project in the-- of the Jacobs Music Center in downtown San Diego. Akustiks is represented here today by Principal Paul Scarbrough. HGA is represented here

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today by associate vice president Jim Moore. And Schuler Shook is represented here today by partner Michael Diblasi. We thank all three of these firms for their generous support of the session. And we can't wait to see Jacobs Music Center when it's done.

And in fact, I'm going to just-- like a drop into my script, actually, to say thank you, sincerely, to all our partners. To all the partners who exhibited here in the exhibit hall and who sponsored us. You know, we really didn't have an incredible, incredible response this year. So much that Steve Alter said at a certain point, "We can't sell anymore." Which, of course, is the words that a CEO loves to hear. So, it was really-- it was really terrific. And you know, they're such great companies. I was wandering around this morning talking to people. And you know, our business partners and our advertisers are part of our ecosystem, and they care about our field as much as people working in orchestras as composers. And it's just, you know, great to have you all here. And we really appreciate your support. So, thank you all.

So, now I'm very pleased to introduce executive director Sarah Weber and board chair Alice Sauro from ACSO for a few closing comments and announcements.

SARAH WEBER: Good afternoon. Is it still afternoon? Good morning. Good afternoon. My eyes are tired. But my heart is full. I really needed this conference. And I hope you all feel the same way that we needed this conference. We needed to gather, recharge, and refuel to prepare for the years of transformative work ahead. The jobs of membership associations like ACSO and the League of American Orchestras are many. We're advocates. We're communicators. We're educators. We're conveners and cheerleaders. But above all, I think we're community builders.

When the pandemic started two years ago, I'd only been the executive director of ACSO for about a year, and I was still getting to know our members and my job and our board and the organization. And we had just celebrated our 50th anniversary and were coming off of this high. And we were thinking about the next 50 years and very high-level thinking and future thinking. And we had to stop all of that and abruptly focus on the now.

And of course, being an association, I wanted us to be able to have answers and solutions for our members and what they were going through as they were shutting down. And we didn't. We didn't know what to do. No one knew what to do. We couldn't solve problems. So, we leaned into what we could do and what we have always done, which was bring our community together so that they could help each other. Because the answers were within the community.

So, we started holding weekly and monthly virtual peer forums, which is what we called them, our constituency meetings, over Zoom. About 12 different constituency groups, which we still hold today. We're still regularly meeting. We pulled facilitators from our membership and said, "Will you please lead this group?" And then what ACSO did was we just gave them a platform and a space to talk. And we laughed. And we vented. But what I found so remarkable about all of these meetings was that they were hopeful because there was an openness and a vulnerability and a willingness to share freely. All the walls came down. All the proprietary "This is our orchestra's thing. We don't know your orchestra. We're different budget sizes. We're in different of the state." All of that vanished instantaneously and there was just free sharing of samples, resources, strategies, planning documents, survey results, program ideas. It was unbelievable.

And over all of those meetings, which there's, I don't know, been hundreds of them by now, we took notes at every single meeting, ACSO did. And then we shared them afterwards. We would email them

out to the different constituency groups so that people had notes to refer to and all the resources that we tracked.

And I wanted to give you a little bit of a flavor of those peer forums, because that's been so fundamental to our community, those peer conversations. They were so wide ranging. They were so valuable. And we had all of this data from the notes we'd been taking that just live in our files.

So, I kind of thought I would do a little bit of an experiment. Do all of you know what word clouds are? Okay, good. They're not a new technology. So, I thought I would take all of these notes and dump them into a word cloud and see what's what. Just see what came up. And I wanted to share a few with you. So, Steve, can you put up that-- thank you.

So, this is a word cloud from our development peer group. Scott Bandrick [?] in the house? Facilitated the development peer group. This was, I don't know, eight meetings worth of notes. And, obviously, it's development. Fund-raisers. Donor. Virtual gala. Major donor. But if you dig a little deeper, you'll find some fun little gems in there. Bag of nuts is my favorite. That was an idea that Auburn Symphony shared, one of our great community orchestras that at an outdoor fund-raising gala, they took Trader Joe's nuts and put their logo on them and gave them out to donors. And the donors loved them. I mean, this is the kind of conversations we were having. Whatever came up, we were talking about it.

Can you flip to the next one?

This is from our community orchestra peer forum. And they talked about everything. You'll see, musicians, obviously, front and center. "Community orchestras. How do we stay engaged with our

musicians? They're our bread and butter. They're our life blood." But they talked about-- there's a number of mentions of DEI. Diversity planning. Wind player. Guest artists. Scenario planning. The community orchestras talked about everything.

And then we'll flip to the next one.

This is our education and community engagement peer group. And of course, no surprise: students, schools, teachers, instruments. There's a lot of negative test. Proof of vaccination is in there. I mean, they were, like-- does this take you back all two years? Whoo.

But the point of showing you these, because I spent hours getting this, I needed to do something with it, but also is I wanted to drive the point home that I think community is-- we have everything we need, right? We have a hard few years ahead of us. We've had a hard few years behind us. We're rebuilding. But I think we have almost everything we need right here. We have the passion. We have the willingness. We have the innovation. We have the intelligence.

And for any gaps that we have for the lack, anything we lack, I believe we are leaning into those and saying, "How can we do better? How can we be more open? How can we be more inclusive? How can we share more? How can we listen more?" And these virtual peer forums have really given me the hope that that's all there.

So, before I turn it over to Alice Sauro, our fearless board president, I want to just say two final things, apart from the message that community is the answer, I want to thank the League and LA Phil. The three of us created a community here to bring this conference together, to work together. And it's

been such a joyful experience. And I want to make an announcement. Barring any more pandemics, we are trying for the third time now to go for our annual conference next year, 2023, ACSO's back doing an annual conference. This will be our third attempt to go to the inland empire in August of 2023. The inland empire, for those of you not from California, is the vast stretch of land east of Los Angeles that includes San Bernadino and Riverside Counties. And it often gets overshadowed by LA. But we are going. They have incredible orchestras, incredible arts. The San Bernardino Symphony is hosting us. We're going to be at the craziest, most beautiful, bizarre hotel you've ever been at. It's The Mission Inn. It's worth coming to the conference just for that. But also, for all the community. And you're all welcome. Come back to California next year in August. And come to the inland empire with us and let's do this all again.

Now I'm going to turn it over to Alice Sauro to close out ACSO's final remarks.

ALICE SAURO: Thank you, Sarah. As she stated, my name is Alice Sauro. And I am proud to serve as the board president for the Association of California Symphony Orchestras, affectionately known as ACSO.

We know the challenges of the past 27 months have been global but learned that the solutions had to be local. In California, ACSO and our courageous leader Sara Weber jumped into action after hearing from all of our members that they needed help. Sarah and her mighty team of three quickly created online sessions for various consistencies and attended every session.

The 11 am Friday session for the CEOs that Chad Smith referenced became our lifeline every single week. This group grew closer than ever as we shared stories of anxiety and fear, which turned into hope and fearlessness. We cried together and encouraged each other, coming away feeling

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connected and with the knowledge that we did not have to do this or navigate this alone. We shared information on closures leading to innovation in the LA recording studios, on Zoom, and in a few venues. Programming was experimental and courageous for some, spurring others to think, I can do something in my local community. How to find testing kits? How to keep our musicians safe within the confines of the state and local mandates?

Some issues were most relevant for northern California, others for southern California. So, we drilled down to the different regions within our states. Eventually, more advocacy was successfully created, a true benefit for our industry in this state. This week, we met one another in person for the first time, having recognized each other from the weekly calls.

Our 53-year-old organization is as vibrant and relevant as ever. Now, onto the next 53 years. Thank you for all-- to all of you for believing in the power of music and for never giving up.

SIMON: Thank you, Sarah and Alice. Your partnership through this conference has just been remarkable. And just-- we've absolutely loved working with you. We think you're a fantastic organization. Many thanks to you.

So, now we come to the second Gold Baton of conference. As we mentioned yesterday, we didn't give a Gold Baton during 2021 because we were virtual, and we thought we wanted to do it all in person. So, we have two this year. Watching Jesse receive the Gold Baton yesterday was-- and hearing his remarks was really a joy. I've known Jesse pretty much as long as I've been in this country. And I, honestly, could not be more honored to succeed him. And, you know, I'll let you into a little secret. I actually called Jesse a couple weeks before conference-- is Jesse here? Yeah. There he is. I called Jesse a couple of weeks before conference and I said, "I'm getting very worried about my 520 8th Avenue, Suite 2005, New York, NY 10018 1602 L Street, NW, Suite 611, Washington, DC 20036 [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org)

schedule. What do I do? How am I going to-- it's just too crazy." And Jesse's best advice was, "Every now and then go to your room and lie on your bed." So, Jesse, of all the advice you've given me over the last two years, that one was golden. Thank you so much for that.

But now we have an opportunity to honor an extraordinary and beloved leader in our field, somebody who has a deep connection with the LA Phil, who speaks through music, but also speaks through very eloquent words as a thinker and humanitarian. He really truly beloved and admired right across our field. And I'm talking about Thomas Wilkins, of course.

And when we were thinking about who would present the award to Thomas, there was really only one person who could do it. And that was Gail Samuel. Gail, as everybody knows, took over as president and CEO at the Boston Symphony after 25 years at the LA Phil. She represents two of the organizations who have been most closely linked with Thomas over many years, other than, of course, his own orchestra, the Omaha Symphony. Gail, many congratulations on-- on your new role in Boston. We're very happy to have you and your colleagues here with us this year. If I may say, welcome back to LA. And the floor is yours to introduce Thomas Wilkins. Thank you so much.

GAIL SAUMEL: Thank you, Simon, for that introduction. And I'm actually really glad to have a chance to just add my thanks, personally, to the League, to ACSO, and to the LA Phil for putting this together and bringing us all together. This has truly, truly been such a joyful time for everybody and it's been great to see you all.

Introducing Thomas Wilkins is a role I have become very familiar with as I have found myself doing it many, many times. That simply means that I am in the very enviable position of working with Thomas in many capacities over many years. And for that, I count myself very lucky.

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Today, it is to present to Thomas the Gold Baton. This award is given by The League of American Orchestras for distinguished service to America's orchestras. And to recognize individuals whose far reaching contributions to the field serve to champion and advance the cause of orchestras and symphonic musics-- symphonic music throughout the country.

It's like it has a, like, bleep-- blooper leap thing. Okay. Sorry. Okay.

Thomas Wilkins' far-reaching contributions include his roles as principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra here at the LA Phil, artistic advisor for education and community engagement, and youth and family concerts conductor at the Boston Symphony, chair of orchestral conducting studies at Indiana University, just-- there's a lot more. So, principal guest conductor Virginia Symphony, and his past positions including a long tenure as music director of the Omaha Symphony, as well as roles in Detroit, Florida, and Richmond, Virginia.

Thomas tells the story of how he was set on his path as a child when he heard a performance of the Virginia Symphony. On behalf of all of us here, I want to say thank you Virginia Symphony for starting Thomas on that path that brings him here today. But more importantly, for putting him on our stages with our orchestras and our audiences week in and week out.

Thomas is, first and foremost, a wonderful artist, and a deeply engage conductor who is adored, and I do not use that word lightly, by musicians, audiences, donors, and members of our staffs across the country. That is one reason that Thomas is here today. Add to that his deep empathy and compassion

and his skills as a collaborator, communicator, and connector, and you begin to really understand the depth of who he is.

Thomas has a gift for collaborating with an incredible range of people and artists. He enjoys and appreciates the challenge and possibility in working with artists who have never performed with an orchestra before. I find the biggest pop artists experience moments of fear and doubt at the daunting idea of working with our brilliant symphony orchestras. And in those moments, Thomas is the secret weapon. Always able to encourage, assure, and assuage fears, resulting in brilliant performances and collaborations.

The ability Thomas has to communicate with other human beings is remarkable. Whether it is with our orchestras, our audiences, or our volunteers and donors, people feel uplifted by his words, and just as importantly, heard by him. I have watched Thomas take a group of students on not only a musical journey, but a journey of self discovery and awareness that allows them to give voice to their hopes, their fears, and their truth. He shares his love for symphonic music by always giving it as a gift, and an opportunity for others to find in it what they need in that moment.

And Thomas creates connections. Connections to our past by giving new life to works of artists who have not been celebrated because they did not fit the European mold of symphonic music.

Connections in the present by being sure that all people, regardless of the color of their skin or their socioeconomic status know that this gift of music is for them. And connections to our future by being a teacher and a mentor. This teaching and mentoring happens not only in his work at Indiana University, with Yola here in LA, or conducting youth and family concerts in Boston, but in simple moments backstage.

I personally attribute to Thomas the fact that my two sons learned at ages seven and eight how to look people in the eye when meeting and speaking to them. He made a connection with them in helping them to learn how to be connectors. I am privileged to work with Thomas, honored to support his work, and grateful to call him a friend.

Before I invite Thomas to come up here, I would just like to read to you what this heavy award says. Okay. I know that you're not supposed to say that because it sounds stupid. Okay.

Thomas Wilkins, an inspirational leader of American orchestras, a committed-- a committed champion of diverse voices, a brilliant educator, and an extraordinary citizen of the world. Thomas Wilkins, with thanks, respect, and deep admiration, I invite you to come up and receive The League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton.

THOMAS WILKINS: Okay. So, I'm speechless. But I do want to begin by saying thank you so much to the League for this recognition. I'm really glad, by the way, that Jesse also received the Golden Baton award because, quite frankly, I probably even-- wouldn't even be at the Hollywood Bowl had it not been for Jesse saying to those guys when they were looking for a new leader, "You know, you should take a look at that Tom Wilkins guy." So, thank you Jesse for that. And thank you that I don't have to give you my Golden Baton award.

I also want to thank Gail for not just being a friend, but taking about four of the points that I was going to make in my speech. So, I can skip this part about the Virginia Symphony 'cause what I was going to say, Gail, about the Virginia Symphony is that everyone knows that as the Norfolk Symphony of 1964 they changed my life forever. Growing up to a single mother on welfare in the housing projects, there was no piano in my house. Probably wouldn't fit anyway. There were no classical music albums laying  
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around for me to hear. There certainly was no such thing as a private lesson. I didn't get a private lesson till I was in college. But there was the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra.

And what I was going to say about the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, which was the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra, is that if it's true that in order to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you have to have boots, it's also true that the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra and the music that they gave me gave me boots.

This is probably not the audience to confess this to, but I'm going to anyway. I remember the first time my manager sitting right there emailed me and said that there was an orchestra I was about to conduct, and I was putting together a program and they wanted to make sure that I included a piece by a BIPOC composer. And I thought, BIPOC? What's BIPOC? I've got to look that up. And so, I did. And I thought, holy cow, I'm BIPOC.

I shared this with the colleague of mine in Washington DC and we just got a chuckle over the fact that I didn't know what BIPOC was. But it started a series of conversations from that point on. And for me it became not so much an epiphany, but a set of reminders. It reminded me of that experience with the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra. It also reminded me of why I wanted to be in this business in the first place. I didn't come at this to build a career. I thought that this was a moral obligation to come alongside people in the community and say, how can we let our music help you help those?

I'm so glad Sarah talked so profoundly about community. That's what I wanted to do. I said to my students at IU, in fact one of them is even here, and he's heard me say this before, when we're on stage, the most important people in the room are not on stage. These men and women come into the building with their own sense of hope and aspiration and longing. And in some cases, they come in  
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the building with their own fears and their own despair, which is the worst kind of helplessness. And it's our responsibility to invite them to be better and to, with our music, invite them to think something better about themselves.

We're stewards of some of the greatest achievements of humankind. This music is life altering and life affirming. And shame on us if we don't see this more as a calling and less as a job.

I was in a Walmart in Omaha and I'm about the fourth person back in line and the cashier, I can see him very clearly, and he's got long, stringy hair and he's got tattoos all over the place. He's got an earring in both ears. And not dressed all that well. And you know, I'm standing in line already making some-- coming to some conclusions about who he is. What he is. What he listens to. By the way, some people call that prejudice.

I get up to the register and he looks at me and he says, "Man, that concert you guys did when you did Appalachian Spring on the first half and Rite of Spring on the second half was killer." I thought, shame on me. I did not expect to hear those words.

Every once in a while, in Boston-- by the way, with the point of that young man in the Walmart, if we're going to talk about diversity in our industry, apparently, we have to be willing to let people be diverse. Just saying.

So, in Boston, after our youth programs, often the ushers or even the teachers and chaperones will ask the kids how they felt about being in Symphony Hall or how they felt about the music that they heard. And sometimes those answers get back, make their way back to me. And sometimes they're

really funny. But on one such occasion the teacher asked this young lady, how did it feel to be in Symphony Hall? And she said, "It was the first time I ever felt safe." Those were not words I was expecting to hear.

A few weeks back I went out into the audience-- because sometimes I don't tell them what the piece is about because I want them to use their imagination and use their own words because-- because it then becomes their music. And so, we had just done the storm movement from Britten's Four Sea Interludes. And I go out into the audience, and I grab this young man and I said, "What was that about?" He goes, "I don't know, but all I can tell you is that I'm really happy and I hope you guys are too because you sounded great." Of course, they sounded great because of their leadership. But that's another point. But those were not words that I expected to hear by a long shot.

Words that I loved hearing occurred quite a few years ago. I was in Connecticut. A post concert reception. A grown woman walks up to me at the reception, and she said, "This is the first time I've ever heard an orchestra concert. And oh my gosh, I had no idea." These are living, everyday, ordinary, going to work, going to school, eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches people. And they deserve our very best.

You know, as has been mentioned already, these have been the last crazy, few years. I kind of think humanity is hanging on by a thread. And I'm starting to tell myself at this stage in my life, listen, let's just savor everything and squander nothing. Savor everything good. Squander nothing.

But I'm also starting to ask myself "Who else?" Who else needs for it to be okay to be different from other people in the room? Who else needs to be safe? Who else needs to just be happy? And who else, for the very first time, deserves the opportunity to discover something wonderful?

I think I'm in a state of urgency. I think we all are. And we need to hurry. Not rush, but hurry to make sure that regardless of what happens, even if we can't save the world, even if we can't save humanity, we can sure make it better. We can ensure that at the end of the day beauty gets to have the last word.

Thank you so very much.

SIMON: We've heard some memorable words at conferences over the years. I quoted Elijah Cummings in my opening remarks. But let's make sure beauty has the last word is really a good one. And a tough one to speak after, I will tell you. So, beautiful, moving words, Thomas. Thank you so much. And really hard to follow.

So, now these are my final words as we reach the end of conference. But before we get to the very end, as we think about who is included, there's one more organization I want to talk about here.

You know, we've talked a lot about this conference about how American orchestras need to be more diverse. We've created fellowship programs, education programs, we've made strides in diversifying our repertoire. But still, there is little to no change in the diversity of the orchestra musicians on stage. And a few weeks ago, an inspiring group of Black orchestral musicians organized themselves and launched the Black Orchestral Network.

In their recent open letter titled "Dear American Orchestras", they express both their deep love for the orchestral community and the pain they feel because of the apparent inability of our field to

change. And I raise this now just because, you know, these are our musicians and friends. And these are our orchestras. All of us together, I think, administrators, musicians, board members, music directors, supporters, community members, this matters. We need to pay attention.

So, my plea to you is, first of all, if you haven't engaged with the Black Orchestral Network, go to their website. Read what they're saying. It's poignant and beautifully articulated. And correct.

Talk about it in your organization. Discuss it at every level. Make a plan. Move from discussion to action. The field really needs this right now. And I think that, you know, at the League we want to do everything we can to support the Black Orchestral Network. They're our friends. And you know, I really-- I don't think Alex is still here. But I really want to thank Alex and Weston and everybody else involved in the Black Orchestral Network for launching this effort which is so much needed. And I really just commend it to you. And I hope we can take it seriously. So, thank you for what you all do about that.

So. So many epiphanies this week. So many highlights. Far too many to report here. I have been jumping from session to session to try and get a flavor of what's being discussed, but also visiting constituency groups to hear about their hopes and challenges. But perhaps one of the most enjoyable encounters-- encounters of this week was about an hour ago with our student constituency conference. This is a new track that we've introduced this year. And I really want to thank the very awesome Sonja Thomas from the Nashville Symphony for pulling together our student-- our student track. Because these are the people who are going to be playing in our orchestras, composing the music we play, running our organizations, and probably doing my job in the years to come. And the future is very important. And the League, I think, we haven't historically had a deep engagement with students. But we want to. And this is very, very important work.



And I did a little exercise with the student group. And it's a little exercise that we do with Essentials of Orchestra Management classes, which is to have each person complete a sentence which goes, "Before the conference I thought that orchestras...and now, I think..." Fill in the gaps.

So, with Diego's permission, thank you Diego, here's what one of them said: "Before the conference I thought that the US orchestra field was conservative and stuck in old traditions of repertoire and old society values. After the conference I saw how the full field is working and really looking to be more open and part of the community, changing their way of interacting, and the messages and values that the art form is portraying."

I love that quote, not only because it's clearly true and it's clearly our path, but because it reminds that a public opinion always takes time to catch up with reality. As I said in the opening session, you know, American orchestras are the most creative in the world. And if there's one thing that this week has proved to me, it's that we are on the move, thinking differently about our relationship with community, about what audiences need from us and don't yet know they need from us, about what we play and who's included, about-- and about how we use our voices and our platform to advocate for justice, for healthy communities, for the stewardship of our planet, and for the future of our young people.

Orchestras are powerful and we are many. And we should never underestimate the impact we can make together through the notes we play and through the words we put around them. This week has been a celebration of that. And we might just reflect on John Williams' words in the opening session: "The future of orchestral music is as bright as it can be because it covers the world." So, I think we should have a round of applause for orchestras.

So, a few final thank yous. First to all, thank you so much to all of you who-- who participated in the League Giving Day. We really appreciate your financial contributions and your generosity of all sizes. There's a still an opportunity to give before our financial year end. And we welcome and very much appreciate your support in helping us to do what we do, which is help you. So, thank you to all of you who contributed to that.

Thank you to the LA Phil. Thank you to ACSO. To all our partners and sponsors. To all our speakers who took time to inspire us. To all those of you who put tremendous energy into developing rich agendas and content for your constituency groups. Thank you to the tireless League staff, board, and donors.

A big thank you to the Westin Hotel, and especially, I want to say a thank you to the many contractors and hourly workers who toil behind the scenes to make our lives run smoothly and allow us to have a great conference.

Lastly, we have a survey, of course. We can only make great conferences with your help. The survey-- you'll probably get it in your phone in a few minutes. Please fill it out. Complete it and help let us shape next year's conference in Pittsburgh, which is a segue to introduce Melia Tourageau, from the Pittsburgh Symphony to tell you about next year.

MELIA TOURAGEAU: Thank you. So, I've had the privilege of running the Pittsburgh Symphony for the last seven years. And I have to tell you, Pittsburgh is no longer a steel town. You have to come. You have to be a part of our incredible community. It is a community. We've been talking all week

about how we're needing to see what our new normal is, what our new-- what our future lies, what-- how do we reinvent ourselves and how do we get through this? Pittsburgh did that 50 years ago. And we are a thriving city of robotics and electronics and technology and eds and meds and a thriving, thriving downtown that was built on culture and investing in downtown through the theatre district and through arts and music.

So, I want you to come. Please be a part of this great organization and our-- and Pittsburgh in our great city. We have the same-- we describe our orchestra like we describe our city. We punch above our weight. There's an incredible authenticity always going for it. And loving our friends.

So, with that, I think we're going to roll a video and hope to see you in Pittsburgh next year.

[VIDEO PRESENTATION]

SIMON: Thank you, Manfred. Thank you, Melia. We're looking forward to see you there. We were there for our board meeting in Pittsburgh just recently. It's a great organization. A very hospitable organization. A great town with great restaurants. And we will have another great conference.

But for now, thank you all from the bottom of my heart. It's meant the world to have you here. Travel safe. Be well.