“Someone who works in the arts is every bit as gainfully employed as someone who works in an auto plant or a steel mill. We’re going to make the point till people are tired of hearing it.”

This quote from new NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman struck me as one of those “obvious” points that clearly is not obvious to a majority of Americans. Kudos to Mr. Landesman for deciding to use his new pulpit to help preach the need for support of individual artists in this country! The NEA’s new slogan is “Art Works,” a phrase that Landesman believes to say, “We matter.” Immediately thought of the professional development program we ran the year called Making Music Work, a two-day seminar for composers who are working hard to understand how to make a career from what they do so well. Over 100 composers signed up for the weekend, and we were delighted when some 30 composers traveled to St. Paul on their own dime to participate.

For the Forum as for the rest of the world, FY2009 was anything but business as usual. We were forced to make some painful sacrifices in the face of declining revenue from all sources. We continue to move forward. As you will read in these pages, our programs this past year were as vibrant an ever. We served hundreds of composers and communities, and engaged people with the creativity of living composers in diverse venues that included traditional concert halls, Indian pow-wows, schools, individual homes, and of course on the newest of mobile devices. Now more than ever, composers are a vital and creative force in our culture who remind us of the power of music to heal, incite and inspire.

We sincerely thank our board members, donors and friends for being such loyal supporters in these difficult times. We could not be a national resource for this field without your help, and we are deeply grateful to all who have said yes to “music works” in the past year.
The American Composers Forum enriches lives by nurturing the creative spirit of composers and communities. We provide new opportunities for composers and their music to flourish, and engage communities in the creation, performance, and enjoyment of new music.

**Grants & Fellowships**

AFC awarded over $370,000 to a diverse group of composers and performers of new music from across the United States. Ranging from small project-related grants for emerging composers to substantial awards designed to reward artistic excellence, we provide artists at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development.

**Residencies & Community Outreach**

By collaborating with communities and performers, AFC composers can create engaging concerts that foster the creative process and broaden the reach of new music in art, theater, performed and heard. Recent residencies have involved partnerships with schools, social service agencies, hospitals, communities, hospitals, and performing ensembles.

**Education**

AFC’s education programs address the full scope of K-12 educational needs, from curriculum and teaching tools to composer residencies, in schools. The Forum’s SoundQuest series of music programs for middle level bands composed for prominent American composers has reached an estimated 300,000 students since inception in 2001, and has sold over 20,000.

**First Nations Composer Initiative (FNCI)**

One of our newest programs, FNCI is building an infrastructure for the creation and performance of Native American music of all genres, and actively encourages the next generation of Native composers and performers in the creation of new work. To date, our national award program, Common Ground, has provided 32 grants to Native composers, performers and organizations to support activities that encourage and sustain their careers.

**Program Series**

The Forum operates a network of five programs, each designed to reward artistic excellence, the United States. Ranging from small performers of new music from across the country, we provide composers and performers of new music with valuable resources for professional and artistic development.

**Corporate, Foundation, and Government Support**

The Forum supports composers’ artistic and professional growth through a rich variety of programs and services, including commissions, performances, readings and fellowships. The Forum’s 1,800 members include composers and performers, presenters and organizations that share the Forum’s goals, and individuals and institutions with an interest in supporting new music. Forum members come from both urban and rural areas; they work in virtually every musical genre, including orchestral and chamber music. “worst” music, opera and music theater, jazz and improvisational music, electronic and electro-acoustic, and sound art.

**Media**

AFC utilizes the full range of media and new technology to spread the word about our programs and initiatives, and to reach new audiences.

**Professional Development**

Through collaborations with educational institutions and performing arts organizations, AFC supports composers’ personal and professional growth through a rich variety of programs and services. The Forum can be heard on over 300 public radio stations nationwide. Our Live, Invent, Recordings, posts an average of 25 releases a year.

**ACF Chautauqua**

The Forum operates a network of five programs, each designed to reward artistic excellence, the United States. Ranging from small performers of new music from across the country, we provide composers and performers of new music with valuable resources for professional and artistic development.

**Donors**

Many Thanks!
Grants & Fellowships

Provision arts at all ages of their career with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. The Forum’s comprehensive grants and fellowships program includes the McKnight Composer Fellowships, the American Composers Forum Centennial Fellowship, the Composer Residencies, the ACF Commissioning Program, the ACF Collaborative and Internship Program, the ACF Concerts Program, the ACF Festival Commission, and the ACF Festival Fellowship.

Professional Development

At the heart of the Forum’s work is providing professional development opportunities for composers. In our clinics across the country, professional musicians and participants engage in master classes, concerts, and professional development sessions. Our clinics and master classes are led by composers and presenters with a diverse range of experiences and expertise, providing opportunities for composers to learn and grow in their craft. Our professional development programs include the ACF Composer Mentorship Program, which pairs emerging composers with experienced professionals, and the ACF Composer Lab, which provides hands-on training and feedback to composers.

Education

The Forum’s education programs provide resources and training for composers and educators to enhance their teaching and rehearsal skills, present professional development seminars, and organize master classes and residencies. At ACF Masterclasses, we aim to bring top performers and conductors to our region for a weekend with their students. The Masterclass program provides a unique opportunity for composers to interact with some of the most talented musicians in the country. The Forum also partners with music schools and universities across the country to offer professional development opportunities for composers.

Media

The comprehensive ACF media programs on American Composers Online, American Composers Forum, and American Composers Forum Shop provide a platform for composers to share their work and connect with other musicians. Through the ACF Composers Datebook, composers can list their events and workshops, and the ACF Press has published hundreds of articles and reviews about contemporary music. Our media programs also include ACF Today, a two-week summer program offered in collaboration with the University of Delaware, which provides opportunities for composers to hone their skills in various aspects of composing and music production.

Partners

The Forum has a long history of partnership with some of the most prestigious organizations in the country, including the Minnesota Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony. These partnerships enable us to bring contemporary music to a wide audience and connect composers with a diverse range of audiences. We also partner with other organizations to provide professional development workshops and residencies for composers.

Future

The Forum’s strategic plan focuses on expanding our programs and services to reach a wider audience. We are committed to providing opportunities for composers to create and perform their music, connect with other musicians, and explore new forms of composition. Through our partnerships, grants, and fellowships, we aim to support the growth of contemporary music and ensure that the next generation of composers has the resources and support they need to succeed.

In conclusion, the American Composers Forum is dedicated to bringing contemporary music to the world through our comprehensive programs and services. We are proud to serve as a catalyst for the development of new music and provide opportunities for composers to express themselves and connect with others. As we look to the future, we remain committed to supporting the growth of contemporary music and ensuring that the voice of contemporary composers is heard by a wide audience.
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