

## **TMA & Stewardship**

By Leo Murphy

The question of why join the Theater Musicians Association is a question that comes up sometimes. Not a lot of musicians are aware of the Player Conferences certified by the AFM, nor their roles in the life of musicians working in the fields those conferences represent. Our Union, at both the National and Local level, confront issues in all fields of music performance as well as performance rights, and consequently are kept quite busy with that process. Player Conferences represent musicians and their concerns in a particular field of music. Player Conferences serve as an advocate and steward working with our Union to address these concerns.

The TMA serves as a national voice when it works to pursue issues that effect musical theater on a national level. The TMA spoke up against the Rogers and Hammerstein Organization's decision to use "Realtime Music Solutions" in an effort to replace live musicians. Letters condemning this action were sent from TMA leadership as well as the AFM President and Local Presidents. The use of virtual orchestra within our field is a constant concern and TMA is an active voice fighting against its use.

TMA/Chicago has participated in the contract negotiations for the BIC contracts for some time. TMA is invited to work with and advise the Local as a representative for the bargaining unit. Prior to the start of talks, the TMA surveyed the bargaining unit, preparing a survey and compiling its results to determine musicians concerns regarding the pending contract discussions. The results are shared with the Local to give all on our side of the table the bargaining units concerns.

These issues come to light because we musicians serve as stewards of our work area, keeping our eyes open to what is going on in our genre. But it can be difficult to address those issues by oneself. Stewardship of our field is the goal of TMA. And working to share information with other Chapters, our Locals and the AFM as we address these issues, is how we achieve that goal. TMA is an advocate representing theater musicians and their interests across North America.