

## Notes from the SAM Long-Range Planning Forum

Friday, March 11, 2011

Cincinnati, OH

Neil Lerner, Secretary

With approximately 35 people in attendance, SAM President **Tom Riis** explained the reasons the Society is engaging in a long-range planning process and opened this forum. Beginning with a breakfast President Riis held with former presidents of the Society at last year's meeting in Ottawa, there was next a meeting of the executive committee of the Society in May to plan the planning retreat that then took place outside Pittsburgh in September 2010. At this point, President Riis turned the meeting over to **Mark Clague**, who with **Maribeth Clark** represented an ad hoc subcommittee on long range planning that had been formed in Pittsburgh. Explaining that the planning session ended with 2 days of new ideas and vision statements, the next step would be figuring out where to go next. Aided with a series of projected PowerPoint slides as well as a handout, Clague shared the results of a survey of the membership.

First, we saw the Vision Statements resulting from the Pittsburgh meeting. These are as follows:

Vision Statements [not in Bulletin article]

1. To be the premier non-profit society for the understanding, promotion, and dissemination of American musics in their global and local contexts.
2. To be the premier organization that advances the discovery and understanding of the evolving world of American music and musical cultures.
3. To be a highly visible and respected organization that supports and disseminates high-quality scholarship on American musics both within the academy and to the general public.

Next, Clague shared that the online survey received excellent participation from the members, counting 265 respondents—about 33% of the Society membership—and generating 66 pages of data and comments. He then projected a series of lists of things on which we strongly agree, issues posing challenges to the Society that should be actively addressed, strategies for increasing funding, and priorities for the future. The Society's gender demographics were split equally in terms of gender, but we are mostly white U.S. citizens. About 75% of the respondents were musicologists, with no one self identifying as an amateur. 50% were tenure-stream faculty, but a large number are graduate students.

Clague ended by pointing to three useful take-aways from the process. First, if diversity is an important value for the Society, we need to nurture and develop it further. Second, we want the Society to remain financially accessible to everyone. Third, members are interested in collaboration, mentoring, sharing teaching materials, archival preservation and access, and copyright education and advocacy.

The final 20 minutes allowed for reactions from the floor. One member (**Bill Brooks**) asked if "archival preservation" was a codeword for internet/network access. President-Elect

**Katherine Preston** responded that she saw over and over in the responses a major priority on access to archives, whether digital or analog. **Wayne Shirley** rose to give thanks for kind words about the Library of Congress's digitization efforts, adding that archives need people who can arrange the materials in such a way that they can be usefully accessed and then digitized. **Paul Charosh** raised the issue of online resources that required subscriptions, asking if it would be possible for the Society to facilitate access to these resources for the Membership. In response, **Kendra Preston Leonard** explained that the vendors for these resources were only set up to grant access to brick and mortar universities, recommending that local colleges & universities will often provide access possibilities. **Brian Moon** wondered if the long-term success of the Society might not need more outreach beyond the core group of musicologists revealed in the survey? **Kay Norton** was curious about the data received regarding fundraising, wondering if the issue was closed; several responded that fundraising was not at all a closed issue for the Society. **Larry Starr** mused on the possible need to broaden our ideas of what constitutes "American music," giving attention to some of the areas still marginalized even within the Society (someone quickly pointed to research on the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an example). Starr pointed to a need to welcome more arts administrators and performers to the Society, wondering how we could produce more Thomas Hampsons.

**Jim Deaville** asked if there was a plan to follow up on the long range process in order to measure success. **Dianna Eiland** asked if there had been a choice to identify as a K-12 educator in the survey, bringing attention to the importance of working with classroom teachers. **Karen Ahlquist** pointed to the difficulties SAM has trying to get past the often incorrect mythologies perpetuated by program note writers and music critics, positing that the Society could find large opportunities for outreach among K-12 teachers.

**Charles Garrett** stated that he found the demographic results from the survey to be "pretty shocking" for a Society that wants to address America and its music. To a smattering of applause Garrett said that a variety of committees, and not just the Membership Committee, need to address this issue.

Paul Charosh asked if anything had come up that surprised the surveyors. Clark had been surprised that there wasn't more representation from non-musicologists. **Douglas Bomberger** inquired about methodology, asking if the survey results could be taken as reflective of the Society as a whole. (A 33% response is quite high, he was told.) **Anne Dhu McLucas** spoke to a need to come up with different formats for what we do (as opposed to the traditional musicological methods of reading and publishing papers), explaining that we need to find different ways of doing things if we want to reach different audiences.

President-Elect Preston ended the session by explaining how this has been an enlightening information gathering process, telling those assembled that one of her goals as President is to help the Society to harness its energy and enthusiasm to move us in a direction to obtain the goals we all share. She explained that the SAM Board is extremely open to ideas and suggestions, inviting people to reach out to the Board and join committees.