

Readers/making it matter contest Nov08

When & where did this happen?

The Musicians of the World Symphony Orchestra, the first orchestra of its kind in the country, was formed in the fall of 2005 in Montreal as a non-profit corporation. In 2006 the orchestra acquired a charitable tax number. The purpose of forming the orchestra was to platform highly trained orchestra musicians that were new & not so new immigrants in Montreal, and who had no opportunity to play in an orchestra. This was due to the competition, and lack of resources and contacts necessary to integrate into the city's closed musical society.

Who was involved?

Joseph Milo, the conductor was speaking to the doorman in the building where we reside, who told him that he had been a principal cellist in the Moscow Symphony and that he was very unhappy. Joseph came to me, his spouse, Lucy Ravinsky, and suggested that since I had already been an orchestra manager, and since he was a conductor, that we should start an international orchestra. We decided to give it a try.

How did they do it?

We posted signs in all the colleges & universities music faculties announcing auditions for the orchestra. We contacted Marcel Tremblay of the Executive Council in Montreal who helped us with the means for buying stands, advertising in foreign papers, & getting on foreign TV. The city of Cote Saint Luc, where we reside gave us access to their auditorium for free once a week, in order to have a place to rehearse.

What did he/she do?

Joseph picked a repertoire for some concert, sometime in the future, & with 23 musicians began to rehearse once a week. I (Lucy) busied myself with trying to get coverage, get more people into the orchestra and to begin fund development. In March 06 we got a full page in the Globe & Mail. This brought us the rest of our ensemble, a base of 50 musicians, 37 of whom are from 18 countries and the remaining 13 from Montreal & Canada. This was done to facilitate the newcomers integration into the Montreal music scene.

What was the result?

We had 3 documentaries done, including the National: Success Story. We performed our first concert in collaboration with Vanier College with little time to prepare. The concert was a great success. And we had our inaugural concert in June 06, after Jeff Heinrich wrote a full page in the Gazette about the orchestra only days before the concert. It was a sellout. We recently performed our 19th concert.

The musicians are well integrated & have found work in one another's communities, friends & colleagues, have more students and are happier and more valuable members of our society as a result. We are referred to as the pride of Quebec, and have been referred to as a kind of peace mission group.

Any other details you'd like to share?

The orchestra is in desperate need of sponsorship funding from companies, organizations & foundations in order to continue existing. Joseph was remunerated for only 4 concerts among the 19 that we have done to date, and I gave up my job in the spring of 2006 in order to realize this project. I have worked for the last two & a half years without getting paid. We need staff, and services to continue our work. We are available to do fund raisers, corporate events, theme concerts & now have a large & varied repertoire. We hope to travel, with the Olympics 2010 in Vancouver being a major desired destination. Please look at our site at www.musiciansoftheworld.ca and you can see us on You Tube by cuing in Joseph Milo, to see many extracts from our various concerts. Please help support the Musicians of the World Symphony Orchestra.