

Michael Dabroski

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(Havana, Cuba) - Michael Dabroski (Vermont Mozart Festival) addresses recent interview statements provided by the **new** Vermont Mozart Festival Board of Directors spokesperson, Gene Richards (BTV International Airport, Director) regarding the 2019 summer concert series cancellation and Mr. Dabroski's professional services in the Vermont community.

NO PAY, NO PLAY. Fact Michael Dabroski received no financial compensation for professional services performed since February, 2019, at the Board of Director's discretion, and very little compensation prior to February 2019 with no guarantee of payment to produce the 4th summer edition of Vermont Mozart Festival in July/August. Therefore, "no pay, no play."

Michael Dabroski states "... the board sought my 40+ hour work weeks as a professional artist and executive without pay for years. Despite my numerous communications regarding compensation to them, they did nothing to help obtain funding or grow the board of directors, and left me to scramble and produce festivals without compensation. I provided a highly detailed Board Operations Manual (adopted January 2018) with By-Laws to fulfill their responsibilities, and yet the board dismissed them routinely. I recruited board members with financial resources, community connections and experience, (Martha Hoehl, Sandi Elliott, Eric Ode, Solomon Bayer-Pacht, Andre Bouffard, Martha Mitchell, Vivian Allen) yet only one contributed financially to VMF (Mrs. Hoehl). Since August, 2018, no director offered their services when asked to chair finance, development or program committees. I was never provided a professional contract or job duties. No professional office space existed. My personal cell phone number was the business number subject to hundreds of calls (without reimbursement) since October 2015. Recognizing the board was a barrier, and the demise of the festival was imminent without drastic change, in May 2019, I requested those members of the board who were not interested in fundraising to resign, but none did. It is possible to produce a festival with minimal resources, but impossible without the boards confidence — I felt my hands were tied."

Fact: the Vermont Mozart Festival Board of Directors thought it appropriate to pay Michael Dabroski for only 5 months of an entire 3.5 year history for professional services to the non-profit Vermont Mozart Festival which included artistic and administrative duties, obtaining 501c3 tax-exempt status, production of 100 orchestra and chamber music concerts of the highest artistic quality, recruitment and awarding of 90 fellowships (representing 75 universities), organizing 3 charity golf tournaments at Burlington Country Club, a charity basketball tournament, resurrecting Shelburne Farms and Trapp Family Lodge as destination concert venues, unreimbursed administrative expenses, facilitating volunteers, marketing, building Mozart festivals with Fellow alumni in the Dominican Republic (2 seasons) and Cuba (2 seasons), cultivating over \$200,000 of corporate sponsorship from NBT Bank, dormitory coordination with Champlain College, and creating recordings as documented at www.vermontmozartfestival.org and social media sites.

DEPARTURE. Fact: Michael Dabroski voluntarily provided the Vermont Mozart Festival Board of Directors with organized notes and electronic files on June 16, 2019, to facilitate the transition—including business accounts, contracts, accounts payable, and bank statements. This, despite being away in the Dominican Republic June 3-10 to implement a Mozart festival with a Vermont Mozart Festival Class of 2017 alumni fellow. All information (accounting, database, by-laws, etc) was accessible to each Board member since the inception of the business in October 2015. For example, included in the June 16 documents were ticket purchase information that Mr. Dabroski organized by individual, venue, and amount, with contact information to communicate cancellation to the media and public. Yet, they falsely claimed that Mr. Dabroski cancelled the festival 1 week prior to the first concert of the festival. The Board of Directors did not communicate with ticket holders despite having the relevant information to do so.

Fact: Under Mr. Dabroski's leadership, the festival operated at 25-30% of the expense of the former Vermont Mozart Festival, and produced more product. However, to continue the festival this summer would incur debt and without a plan to fundraise would (from Mr. Dabroski's perspective) be unethical and similar to the situation the former Vermont Mozart Festival left behind—which left debt exceeding \$250,000 (which included, ironically, the **old** Gene Richards).

Fact: on April 23, 2019 Michael Dabroski learned that the VMF annual gala was cancelled unexpectedly and abruptly; no basketball tournament was scheduled; the chairperson of the charitable golf tournament sought to cancel the event 15 days prior to tournament (although he had 345 days to organize it); and Mr. Dabroski's efforts to elect 4 new board members (including the former chair of the VSO and a development person with \$200 million fundraising experience) in January 2019 were obstructed.

Fact: The Vermont Mozart Festival marketing and brand manager quit abruptly and unexpectedly on April 24, 2019 prior to the July/August festival without a succession plan. His responsibilities included all social media management, graphic design, printing and publicity, and was impossible to replace so close to the opening of the July festival.

Fact: Havana Chamber Orchestra was scheduled to perform in Vermont this summer as part of the festival, but all fellowship development in Cuba was unsupported by the Board of Directors, making this event impossible to coordinate in good faith.

In lieu of the Vermont Mozart festival summer season, Michael Dabroski (a professional violinist, artist and conductor (www.dabroski.com)) travelled to Cuba in June to pursue music opportunities. Mr. Dabroski develops Mozart string quartet projects at the pleasure of the Austrian Ambassador to Cuba and serves as an Artistic Advisor to the premiere Cuban music conservatory, Lyceum Mozartiano de la Habana (supported by the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation). Here Mr. Dabroski is able to use music as diplomacy, a long-held value of his.

CLOSING. Mr. Dabroski is concerned that if the community follows a plan contrived by the **old** Vermont Mozart Festival spokesperson (Mr. Richards), the festival will follow in an unsustainable path without the necessary fellowship and without serving Vermonters. To be successful, Vermont Mozart Festival needs a competent and experienced Board of Directors who will honor their responsibilities, pledges and commitments faithfully.