

# Senza Sordino

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## CLEVELAND REVISITED ICSOM's Sixteenth Conference

In the past it has been customary for your editor to summarize the activities of each ICSOM Conference and to print an account in the October issue of *SENZA SORDINO* for the edification of our general membership.

It is now our feeling that this approach has the negative effect of glossing over the more meaningful happenings of the five day meeting and that space should be made for more in depth reporting of specific subjects and reports. It is our fondest dream that each delegate will in fact go back to his or her orchestra, make a written report and take orchestra meeting time to discuss and deal immediately with the more urgent issues at hand.

We applaud those who do, but since the dissemination of information is the essence of the organization and of paramount importance in maintaining ICSOM's health, *SENZA SORDINO* will try to serve as surrogate in those instances where information is reported late by delegates to their orchestras. In this regard, Nancy Griffin, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, has graciously offered her assistance in giving some subjects special treatment.

This year's Conference extended over a five-day period from August 29th to September 2nd in Cleveland, site of ICSOM's first official conference in 1962. Thirty-eight orchestras were represented. A warm welcome was extended to six new orchestras that have joined our ranks. They are: the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra (Chicago), Hartford Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Oklahoma City Symphony and the Toledo Symphony.

The Conference was welcomed by Tony Granata and Mike Scigliano of Cleveland, Local No. 4, as well as by the Mayor of Cleveland, Ralph I. Perk. The American Federation of Musicians was again represented by Ted Dreher, Symphony Department, and David Winstein, a member of the A.F.M. Executive Board. Other guests included Lou Naumann, President of Local 10, St. Louis and Sam Levine, Toronto, Chairman of the Canadian Conference, A.F.M. Other invited guests and speakers were: Adrian Gnam, Assistant Director of the Music Program, National Endowment for the Arts; Congressman Ted Weiss (D) New York; Barry Nicholsberg, Assistant to Congressman Fred Richmond; former Secretary of Labor, William J. Ussery and orchestra managers Tom Morris, Boston; Oleg Lobanov, National; and Peter Pastreich, St. Louis of the Major Manager's Conference.

Workshop sessions on the subjects of orchestra pension, negotiations techniques, the role of the orchestra committee, and the specific problems of emerging orchestras are always of value and interest. Much time was made available for the discussion of these agenda items. ICSOM counsel Phil Sipser and Len Leibowitz and Bob Jones, Portland, Oregon, handled these informative areas skillfully.

The imminent A. F. of M.-Recording Industry negotiations were discussed at length as was the entire subject of the electronic media. Since there has been an expansion of activity in these areas by the major symphony orchestras, the subject was re-introduced by the three representatives of the Major Manager's Conference when given conference time to speak on the subject, *What's on the Managers' Minds*.

The Orchestra Fellowship Program was discussed and its principle supported by the Conference.

Sundry reports on the ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund, the operation of *SENZA SORDINO*, The ICSOM-A.F.M. Strike Fund, the general health of our treasury and an assortment of ICSOM officer reports on their activities were presented and will be made available when the official minutes are transcribed. The services of our able counsel was retained for the coming year.

The site for next year's Conference will be San Diego. We extend our appreciation to all in Cleveland who made our stay so comfortable; a special salute to Bert Siegal of the Cleveland Orchestra who missed his orchestra's trip to Mexico so that he could stay to make the necessary arrangements for our comfort. It was a task well done.

## SEGALL REPORTS TO ICSOM DELEGATES

This has been a year of unusual growth for ICSOM. Our recognition as the spokesman for symphony, opera and ballet musicians has been manifested by an invitation to us—through me—to serve on several panels of the National Endowment for the Arts (the Orchestra Panel and the Planning Section); An invitation was extended by the American Symphony Orchestra League to send a panel of musicians to participate in the A.S.O.L. Conference in New Orleans; by being asked to serve on a panel in Atlanta at a Confederation of Women's Associations for Symphony Orchestras; by being asked by the Major Managers organization for input into their meeting, and conversely having them ask for conference time at the ICSOM Conference; by our constant contact and meeting with Congressman Richmond's office and the National Council for Arts and Education in New York.

All of these activities serve to point up ICSOM's national recognition as a player's spokesman and I mention them also to give you an idea of my activities this year. I also put into action the five resolutions passed at the Denver conference last year; the three dealing with the Electronic Media (P.B.T.V., FM radio and cable T.V.), the resolution asking for musician input into the National Endowment for the Arts, and the resolution supporting the Orchestra Fellowship Program.

We have unfortunately had to bring to an unsuccessful conclusion the three-year effort to establish a nationwide Health and Welfare Plan.

There was the usual activity in other areas which included the publication of the current ICSOM Directory and the usual necessity to prod people into sending ICSOM Wage Chart data to Ted Dreher.

I want to publicly thank all the members of the Executive Board for their cooperation and work. My association with them is a highlight in my life. I hope that you all appreciate, as I do, the high regard and respect that ICSOM enjoys in this nation. This regard and respect gives us a voice now stronger than ever. This voice goes into the A.F. of M., the N.E.A., manager's offices, the press and into the very halls of Congress. We must continue to build and strengthen this voice and use it in an effective and responsible manner.

## MANAGERS SPEAK AT CONFERENCE

A lively exchange of ideas took place between ICSOM delegates and Major Manager representatives at a session entitled "What's on the Managers' Minds," at the Cleveland Conference. Management participants included Tom Morris of the Boston Symphony, Peter Pastreich of the St. Louis Symphony and Oleg Lobanov of the National Symphony, who indicated that although they spoke as individuals, they felt they presented consensus items from the recent A.S.O.L. meeting in New Orleans. Morris opened with the observation that musicians are the prime assets of our symphony orchestras; we should attempt to break down the we/they concept; efforts such as funding need to involve management, trustees and musicians. Lobanov added that managers should seek improved understanding and input from musicians. We are all on the same side of the fence in many instances, he said, despite the adversary situations which occur, as in collective bargaining, but a reservoir of good will is, he feels, essential if, together, we are to accomplish our organizational goals without injury to the organization. Pastreich addressed himself to the question of how "participatory management" can be carried out once the collective bargaining process is finished. He stated that management can not simply issue orders and expect musicians to carry them out unless the musicians themselves are a part of the decision-making process. Special concerns were expressed about disciplinary and artistic standards in the "executive sense", and he stressed that section leaders should be more responsible in these areas but presently are not. "Participatory management" implies that problems within sections should be handled by section leaders but Pastreich feels that principals are still more labor than management oriented. He feels that discipline problems may exist because musicians are hired without the benefit of an interview. Pastreich also wondered whether job satisfaction for musicians really improves with quantitative gains such as money and vacation. He senses that regardless of what gains are made, musicians still seem unhappy and dissatisfied with their lot. Thoughts from ICSOM delegates included the feeling that all musicians should be treated equally regardless of their status in the orchestra and one delegate expressed the opinion that, starting with the concertmaster, there seemed to be an immediate 50% dropoff in respect for others by the management. It was suggested that the idea of a caste system was a holdover from the 19th century practice of importing principal players, and that principals should have musical and artistic responsibilities but not disciplinary ones. In answer to a query as to whether the three young managers were typical of other new managers in the views they held, Morris replied that it is difficult to generalize, but that there was a movement to increase communication. Lobanov expressed the opinion that perceptions were changing on both sides, with mutuality of attitudes more evident.

Regarding funding, Tom Morris felt that there should be greater cooperation between musicians and management in seeking unearned income. Lobanov suggested that we should concentrate on funding efforts that have more relevance to our own profession, rather than general arts funding. Organizations which are involved in arts funding were mentioned, including A.A.A. (American Arts Alliance) and N.C.S.O.S. (National Committee for Symphony Orchestra Support). Pastreich is on the board of the latter, and feels that ICSOM input and financial contributions would be of value. In turn, managers were urged to support the Richmond Bill and at least give it a chance. A delegate suggested that musicians feel discouraged when managements discount our efforts to help with funding. The managers indicated that they would consider this for they see serious financial problems in the future with federal aid totally inadequate. The managers were apprised of the fact that ICSOM had long been active in behalf of Federal arts funding. As a voluntary organization with no paid staff and only a modest

budget, ICSOM has a history of generating letters, articles and spurring the efforts of others in behalf of support for the arts.

Recordings and the electronic media were discussed at length. Morris expressed feelings of frustration, asserting that we need specific conditions in this area for symphony orchestras. Concerning recordings, the biggest problem he sees is the so-called two-hour rule, which guarantees two hours pay to each musician of the orchestra whether he is used in the recording or not. He asked how we can work with the Federation and the recording companies to improve the situation especially with regard to increasing access to the small orchestra repertoire. Delegates suggested that the present provision allowing for the addition of a fourth hour at straight time has not been used very much. The managers thought that the provision is not very productive. Pastreich would prefer that recording and media matters presently the purvey of the Federation, be negotiated locally, however ICSOM is concerned that an assortment of scales, the result of such an arrangement, would lead to unfair competition. Where records are concerned, managements are focused into lower costs and more flexibility.

The observation was made that artistic levels are higher now than ever before. Management feels that the players themselves make the orchestras sound better each year. Regarding the original management concerns about input from musicians, ICSOM delegates felt that such input is not just a matter of continuing dialogue, but consists rather of a learning process on both sides. We must examine our approaches in light of existing biases, and attempt to keep our communication two-way. More time needs to be spent by both players and management on the mutual goal of learning to work together. The exchange of thoughts at the Conference in Cleveland may represent a step toward making this goal possible.

Nancy Griffin,  
Seattle Symphony Orchestra

## CONGRESSMAN WEISS URGES LEGISLATION OUTLAWING MANDATORY RETIREMENT

Appearing before the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians in Cleveland, Ohio, Congressman Ted Weiss (D-L, 20th CD, N.Y.) called for the elimination of mandatory retirement of older workers both in the public and the private sector of employment. A member of the House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor, Weiss expressed his special concern for closing loopholes which have permitted unions and management to "bargain away" the protection afforded to older Americans in the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

Weiss pointed out that "Now the rules apply unequally . . . for example, conductors can continue to demonstrate their talents long after age 65, but symphony and orchestra musicians are not afforded a similar opportunity."

He cited an AMA committee finding which opposed mandatory retirement because "Enforced idleness robs those affected of the will to live full, well-rounded lives, deprives them of opportunities for compelling physical and mental activity and encourages atrophy and decay."

Weiss' proposal, co-sponsored by Congressman Henry Waxman of California, is scheduled for action in the House early this fall and in the Senate before the end of the year.

It differs from the Pepper-Findley bill recently passed by the House since that legislation merely seeks to raise mandatory retirement level in the private sector to age 70 and removes all levels for forced retirement of federal employees only.

## DENVER MUSICIANS GIVEN HATCHET JOB

On January 1, 1977 the Denver Symphony Association hired a new executive director, Carlos Wilson, from Houston, Texas. In May 1977 they also hired an attorney from Houston, Neil Martin, who in collaboration with Mr. Wilson was instrumental in the 4½ month Houston Symphony Orchestra lockout. On September 21, 1977 the Denver Symphony Orchestra musicians were locked out, even in light of the musicians' unconditional offer to work and negotiate. Subsequent to this action *six weeks* of the season have been cancelled in an effort, according to the former President of the Board Ralph Mayo, to teach the musicians what a balanced budget is.

It seems evident that their negotiating strategy parallels that used by them in Houston: for example, a game-plan consisting of long hours discussing contract language and many weeks of non-productive sessions. Particular items that have appeared in both management proposals are elimination of Union requirements, asking for unlimited divided and subdivided units, unlimited run-outs, elimination of a fixed day-off, reduction of 5 day weeks.

The Denver Symphony Association currently has an alleged deficit of \$500,000. As of June 31, 1977, the deficit was approximately \$200,000. *This deficit was more than doubled* in the remaining ten weeks of our past season, a fact which we attribute entirely to an unsuccessful, poorly thought-out, ill-planned summer season designed by executive director Carlos Wilson. This opinion is reinforced by a revealing article appearing in a local newspaper journal. It seems that the problems with the summer series began last fall when Oleg Lebanov, former executive director of the D.S.O., tried to reach agreement with the Central City Opera Association to have the symphony play in the pit at Central City during the month of July.

Central City was willing to pay \$35,000-\$40,000 for the services of the D.S.O.—an amount which exceeded what the opera association normally budgets for an orchestra. When Carlos Wilson arrived in January, he re-evaluated the financial arrangements and concluded the orchestra could make more money than Central City was offering by producing its own concerts during July. After a series of meetings between the parties, the Central City arrangement fell apart in early April.

The D.S.O. then attempted to put together a summer series long after the most attractive soloists had committed themselves to other engagements. The D.S.O. were forced to book whatever artists were available. All were undeniably accomplished entertainers (Mel Torme, Della Reese, Ethel Merman, Jerry Lewis and Red Skelton) but none was likely to appeal to the traditional symphony audience—a situation reflected at the box office.

Last season the Denver Symphony season was 46 weeks in length. Minimum salary was \$300 a week. The D.S.O. association offered no salary raise for this year and a subsequent raise of only \$15 in each of the following two seasons. Incredibly, they demand a reduction in the season to 41 weeks immediately, with an increase to 44 weeks in the third year. Virtually every benefit currently enjoyed would be drastically slashed under the proposal which was rejected by the orchestra members and which resulted in the current lock-out.

The orchestra committee has examined the three year financial projection of management. The only cut-back written into it is the musicians' salaries and pension.

We will keep you up to date on this dastardly operation.

The Orchestra Committee of the Denver Symphony Orchestra

## A WARM WELCOME INTO ICSOM

### Toledo Delegate Shares His Conference Experience

As I first strolled into the Cleveland Plaza lobby, the line was already forming in front of the registration desk. ICSOM delegates were arriving from all over the country to participate in a conference any major corporation would have been proud to produce. From the beginning, the people involved showed themselves to be articulate, knowledgeable, and persuasive. I was struck by the ability of these accomplished musicians to speak on wide-ranging subjects with expertise and experience. And I was reminded of the continuing struggle of which we must all be a part to preserve and protect our dignity, our welfare, our livelihood.

The conference began with the necessary routine of roll calls and officers' reports. But soon it was time for the transaction of business very important to the Toledo Symphony and five other orchestras: our membership vote. Inauguration was quick and painless and in pleasant contrast to the long preparation my orchestra had taken to apply for ICSOM membership. And in the course of 5 days, the conference was deftly taken through the agenda with the same confidence that, not coincidentally, marks the performances of our nation's orchestras.

The apres-agenda activities were perhaps the ones of greatest learning for me. Insight gained from being taught can not compare with insight gained from experience, and I found the individual sharing of experience to be invaluable from both a personal and professional standpoint. The workshops, while not always relevant to the present-day operation of my smaller orchestra, were nevertheless informative and interesting. The presentation by Messrs. Leibowitz and Sipser on negotiating techniques deserved a special mention for its value, and there could not have been too much advice from our learned speakers on this subject.

Now that the conference is over, I realize that the hard work has but barely begun. Telegrams, letters, speeches, and meetings are just a part of the workload facing the delegate, committees, and orchestras. I have learned that hard work is necessary for our success as respected and well-paid musicians. ICSOM has provided the strength and confidence to set this goal and make its attainment both reachable and worthwhile.

With warm regards to my colleagues of ICSOM,

Larry Shiller,  
Toledo Symphony Orchestra

## Skrowaczewski to Leave Minnesota Orchestra

On July 5th, during an orchestra break, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski announced his resignation as Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra effective August 1979. Later in the day he read his letter of resignation to the orchestra's Board of Directors. Skrowaczewski, who came to the orchestra (then the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra) in 1960, noted that his tenure had been one of the longest as Music Director of a major American orchestra. He said in his letter that he now wanted to be "independent of the stringent demands, limitations, and responsibilities of directing one major orchestra so that I may freely pursue my career as a conductor-composer."

Two players have been asked to serve on the search committee for his successor. Management has also requested ICSOM Conductor Evaluation information on conductors who have directed the Minnesota Orchestra in subscription concerts the past two seasons.

Kirke Walker,  
Minnesota Symphony Orchestra

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## ADRIAN GNAM ADDRESSES DELEGATES

Adrian Gnam, the articulate Assistant Director of the Music Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, addressed the ICSOM Conference, putting the activities of his office in perspective for all present. Gnam, an oboist and conductor is still an active musician, serving on the faculties of both the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the Greensboro Eastern Music Festival. He has played with the American Cleveland and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, and has guest conducted in the U. S., Europe and South America.

He said that the NEA still funds very little of the operating budgets of the *major* symphony orchestras—only an average of 2.3% of all such budgets, and 33% of all orchestras supported by the endowments. While having a minor impact in this respect, Federal money has been a catalyst in raising other public money and private contributions. However, the NEA is still a relatively young agency and progress is being made. It was pointed out by a delegate that although grants have increased each year, (major orchestras presently can receive \$155,000 a year) actually the percentage of the Endowment “pie” going to symphony and opera orchestras has decreased. While agreeing, Gnam pointed out that an increasing numbers of arts groups on the “periphery” have been added to the NEA program. Smaller communities are now applying for grants at an increasing pace and deference must be given to these requests. The smaller institutions can have a loud bark and congressmen from rural areas are responsive to it. Pragmatically, NEA appropriations need the support of *ALL* Congressmen, rural and urban. What we see is a reflection of the growing involvement of the people of this nation in the Arts. They are truly for everyone.

It would seem, as Gnam points out, that where orchestras are concerned, they might well do some barking on their own if there is dissatisfaction. It was suggested by several that perhaps our spokesmen are not as charismatic or persuasive as spokesmen for other facets of the Arts. (Ed.—perhaps our own “Gregory Peck” would be advantageous.) Certainly orchestra managements in cooperation with the musician should put their collective act together in order that we derive our “fair share”. This is an attitude to which all would agree.

The recently announced Challenge Grant Program of the NEA was described as a shot in the arm and a boon to our orchestras. Grants on a 3 to 1 and 4 to 1 ratio were recently announced for 16 orchestras and opera companies in the first round. These were for major institutions, however, smaller groups have indicated that they too, are well able to meet the fund raising requirements necessary to qualify for this Federal money. This encouraging development will enable the NEA to go back to Congress and ask that the program be extended from the present three years to five years. The expansion to include smaller institutions may slow the granting of funds to all applicants, but the view is optimistic for servicing all applications which meet the qualifications. Where 12 million is currently available, 20 million will be available in the third year of the Challenge Grant Program.

Adrian Gnam praised Irving Segall, ICSOM Chairman, for his contribution to the NEA Orchestra Panel, a post to which he was appointed last year. “He was a gem without whom the NEA would not have the total picture of the orchestra field.” Gnam left with our suggestions for inclusion of ICSOM in the small grant program if qualifications can be made by our organization.

## RICHMOND BILL GAINS SPONSORS

SENZA SORDINO has devoted much space to the explanation and promotion of the Richmond Arts and Education Bill, H.R. 1042. It is a bill which would provide for a check off box for voluntary contributions to the Arts on the Federal tax return. Barry Nicholsberg, assistant to Congressman Richmond addressed the ICSOM Conference, updating progress of the bill and suggesting avenues of support.

Besides the check off feature of the bill, principal provisions assure that contributions would be earmarked for either the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities, or both equally; that none of the monies raised in this manner would be used for administrative purposes; that monies raised in this manner shall not affect the amount annually appropriated by the Congress for the National Endowments.

The bill is presently in Committee awaiting to pick up enough support to start it moving through the legislative process which could mean passage. Phillip Kadis, Washington Star reporter, recently wrote:

“They laughed when Rep. Fred Richmond sat down at the old legislative piano on Capitol Hill two years ago and rolled out a tune about a billion dollar program for the Arts and Humanities.”

“Oh, he’s just getting ready to run for the Senate,” they said of the Brooklyn Democrat who did so much to save Carnegie Hall from destruction. “He’s not serious.”

Well, they’re not laughing anymore.

Kadis goes on to say that the bill has picked up 79 co-sponsors in the House and that what is prompting a new look at the bill is clear evidence that Richmond and the Arts and Education constituency are “digging in their heels for a long fight to get the legislation passed.”

Nicholsberg urged an avalanche of letters in support of hearings for the bill as a way of lifting it out of the Ways and Means Committee. He pointed out that H.R. 1042 is merely a money collecting bill and that the forum for discussion on how the money is to be distributed, would be the subsequent hearing to be held prior to a vote on the bill itself.

Would such a vast flow of private money into the National Endowments have the negative effect of decreasing Federal appropriations to the arts, despite the safeguards in the bill? Nicholsberg stated that after confronting several congressmen with the question the response seemed to be that this might have been the case ten years ago. However, in the present pro-art climate, such private monetary support by citizens would indeed have the effect of substantiating the desire of the public for government support and provide an encouraging sign to their representatives.

At this point both the American Symphony Orchestra League and the National Endowment for the Arts are uncertain about the bill. Apparently their feeling is that there needs to be more discussion as to the distribution of money and the effects of private giving on a local level. ICSOM has asked for letters from orchestra managers regarding their position and outlining their reservations. As for ICSOM itself, it is credited by Rep. Richmond for bringing the results of the Louis Harris survey, *Americans and the Arts*, to his attention and providing the impetus for the bill. The need for funds is great. Perhaps someone can come up with a more imaginative idea, but ICSOM feels that H.R. 1042 is presently “the only game in town” and will continue to lend it its full support.