

Senza Sordino

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THE ARGUMENT FOR TAPED AUDITIONS

(The following article has been prepared for Senza Sordino by Brad Buckley, ICSOM vice-chairman and chairman of an ICSOM subcommittee established in 1981 to investigate the use of audio tapes in the audition process. The subcommittee presented its report at the 1982 conference; a copy of the report, which contains guidelines for the preparation and use of audition tapes, is available from each orchestra's ICSOM delegate. The subcommittee recommends that ICSOM orchestras seriously consider the use of tapes as part of the audition screening process.)

Have you ever served on an audition committee?
When was the last time you took an audition?

How you answer these questions might indicate your awareness of how larger numbers of audition applicants and jet-age travel expenses are combining to create nigh-intolerable situations for audition committees and for people taking auditions.

More music schools are graduating more musicians than ever, musicians seeking orchestra positions. If you're one of these, air travel makes it possible for you to go across the country for an audition. All it takes is money. Lots of money, especially if you play cello, bass, tuba, or contrabassoon. The best part comes after the airline ticket is bought, after you make the trip, when you may get to play for ten minutes or less for an audition committee that has to listen to many applicants in the middle of a busy concert season. You may consider yourself lucky that you got to play at all, considering that, in order to deal with increasingly larger numbers of applicants, many audition committees, managers, and music directors are looking at written résumés and making some hard decisions about who should be encouraged or discouraged or even allowed to audition.

What if you are in the ABC Philharmonic and wish to audition for the XYZ Symphony? Chances are you will have a service on the day of the audition. Even if your orchestra is understanding and willing to excuse you, maybe you feel it's nobody else's business that you're taking an audition.

There is an answer to these problems: an audio tape submitted as part of the résumé required by orchestras. Tapes make it possible for an audition committee to reduce an unmanageably large number of applicants to a size the committee feels it can handle with the care and consideration needed to make its decisions. Tapes save applicants unnecessary travel and lodging costs. Tapes enable a musician in one orchestra to learn if another orchestra has a serious interest in his or her playing.

The Boston, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Toronto orchestras have tried using audition tapes. Applicants for positions in Boston and St. Louis were required to go to those cities to make tapes under controlled conditions. San Francisco had applicants make tapes, under the supervision of the orchestra's personnel manager, in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Toronto accepted tapes prepared by the appli-

cants after mailing them instructions and copies of the required repertoire. The audition committees in these orchestras deserve praise for their willingness to break new ground. Other orchestras interested in using tapes are urged to contact the orchestras that have already done so and learn their opinions.

There are serious questions which need to be considered about the use and making of audition résumé tapes. Let's briefly look at a few of them.

What about cheating?

Tapes should be used only as part of a résumé; no one should ever be hired solely on the basis of a tape. The fact that a live audition will follow an acceptable taped audition should discourage anyone from submitting a "ringer" tape (played by someone else). An applicant who submits a tape falsified in any way will be found out at the live audition and will have spent travel money, and tape preparation money, foolishly.

What about tape sound quality?

Taped sound is, of course, never the same as live sound no matter how flattering the acoustical environment where the tape is made or how well the tape is made. Remembering that the function of tapes is to reduce the number of applicants to a manageable number, audition committees should make judgments less on the basis of taped tone quality than on other aspects of performance which bear greatly on ensemble skill: intonation, rhythm and pulse, phrasing, style, and basic instrumental proficiency. Of course, applicants should be encouraged to make tapes as sonically excellent as possible.

Where should tapes be made?

There are many recording facilities across the country where good quality tapes can be made at reasonable cost. The ICSOM taped audition subcommittee feels that the most efficient and least costly policy is to allow individual candidates to make their own tapes using the facilities of their choice.

How do tapes save the committee time?

Tapes can be listened to at any time at the convenience of the audition committee and according to a format determined by each audition committee. Committees also have control over how long to listen. Scheduling and "no-show" problems are completely eliminated.

What repertoire would be played?

Ideally, a standardized repertoire list agreeable to all orchestras would be established for each instrument. This would prevent applicants from having to make a new tape for each position sought. The content of such a list, which would include acceptable solo pieces from which the applicant could choose as well as standard orchestral excerpts, could be rotated among orchestras year by year. This would also ensure that audition committees are listening to current tapes.

(Continued on Page 2)

TAPED AUDITIONS*(Continued from Page 1)**Can the applicant's anonymity be preserved?*

Certainly. Tapes can be given numbers correlated with names on a master list prepared by someone designated by the audition committee.

The desirability of preserving anonymity and of eliminating discrimination on some basis other than musical merit is the reason ICSOM does not recommend the use of videotapes. Furthermore, the sound quality of videotapes is not as good as that of well-made audio tapes.

Given the great potential savings of time, money, and energy for our audition committees, our students, and our colleagues, ICSOM urges our members to seriously consider the use of tapes in the audition process.

Brad Buckley

It has come to the attention of ICSOM officers that some players in American symphony orchestras have recently received letters which might be interpreted as implying ICSOM endorsement of a non-profit audio- and video-taping service called IVASI. As stated in the accompanying article on taped auditions, ICSOM suggests that individual audition applicants be responsible for making their own tapes through the service of their choice, presumably one which can provide the best possible tape for the most reasonable expenditure. While ICSOM does not discourage use of IVASI's service, ICSOM does not endorse IVASI or any other specific taping service.

WHAT ICSOM MEANS TO LOUISVILLE

ICSOM means information. In 1980, we musicians in Louisville were a grossly underpaid, overworked, part-time orchestra. We had grown accustomed to subservience, and we realized that we were unprepared to become active participants in determining our future. ICSOM membership gave us the information and the opportunity to learn from other members so that we, too, could become responsible and confident activists.

ICSOM means support. When we were on strike in 1981, Mailgrams from other orchestras lifted our morale. The first one we received was from Philadelphia. We on the picket line were touched to know that the Philadelphia Orchestra cared about us. Our newspaper was so impressed, this Mailgram was printed in the paper. We were eventually able to ratify a contract that made us a full-time, salaried orchestra.

ICSOM means people. As the ICSOM representative, I am more fortunate than the rest of my orchestra because I have been able to meet all the other representatives, who are the most intelligent, supportive, and beautiful people ever to assemble in one room. Their example is a constant reminder to me of the direction in which I want to grow and educate my orchestra to grow.

ICSOM means responsibility. Every gain or loss we have in Louisville reflects back on ICSOM. Whatever we learn in Louisville can be of value to others. We have the moral obligation to give back to ICSOM the benefits we have received.

*Patricia Brannon
Louisville Orchestra ICSOM Representative
Vice-Chairman for Southern Orchestras*

A RECOMMENDATION

The Association of Canadian Orchestras has produced an excellent little booklet entitled *Auditions are Just the Beginning: A Career Guide to Orchestras*. The 48-page guide, an outgrowth of ACO touring seminars on getting jobs in symphony orchestras, is authored by Wendy Reid, a former administrator of the ACO's "Orchestra Openings," and Christopher Weait, co-principal bassoonist of the Toronto Symphony and noted teacher.

The handbook contains answers to basic questions about audition procedures, preparing for and performing auditions, working conditions in symphony orchestras, orchestra organization, and union membership. Although the booklet contains a few pages geared to the Canadian scene, nearly all the information and advice is timely and pertinent for U.S. orchestra players, teachers, and students.

Copies may be obtained by sending a check or money order in the amount of \$5.00 (U.S.), which includes postage and handling, to the Association of Canadian Orchestras, 56 The Esplanade, Suite 311, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5E 1A7. Discounted rates are available for bulk orders.

BALTIMORE HOSTS ICSOM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 22nd annual ICSOM conference will be held in Baltimore this year, from Monday the 22nd through Friday the 26th of August. Baltimore last hosted the convention in 1969. Since that time, the city of Baltimore has progressed as much as ICSOM has, and much of this progress will be visible from within walking distance of Baltimore's downtown Hilton Hotel, site of this year's meeting.

The hotel is situated in the heart of the downtown area, six blocks north of Baltimore's famous inner harbor, with its two colorful waterfront shopping-dining-entertainment harborplace pavilions, the Maryland Science Center and Davis Planetarium, the Pier Six Pavilion (a futuristic white fiberglass tentlike outdoor concert center and site of several of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's summer concerts), numerous restaurants and nightspots, and the magnificent National Aquarium on Pier Four. Naval vessels from the United States and foreign lands are sometimes open to visitors.

Fourteen blocks north of the Hilton, past the Peabody Conservatory of Music and the beautiful, historic Mt. Vernon residential area, is Baltimore's venerable Lyric Opera House, home of the Baltimore Opera Company and site of many additional attractions each year. Formerly the Lyric Theatre, the opera house was the home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for decades until the present season. It is currently undergoing a splendid renovation and expansion.

Twelve blocks north of the hotel is the Baltimore Symphony's second greatest pride and joy (the first being the orchestra itself), the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, one of the newest and finest concert facilities in the country.

After putting in long days during the conference, hard-working ICSOM delegates will have no difficulty sustaining themselves with Baltimore's famous cuisine, which features seafood specialties of all kinds from the Chesapeake Bay, including those legendary crabcakes.

We in Baltimore are looking forward to serving as this year's host.

*Charles Underwood
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
ICSOM Representative*

ICSOM CONFERENCE IN FOCUS

A Message from ICSOM Chairman Frederick Zenone

We orchestra musicians have long believed that we should have a voice in the decisions that affect our art and profession. We have often felt that our voice has not been prominent enough in the establishment of our orchestras' policies and practices. Today professional workers in many fields are expressing the same desire for democratic participation in the affairs of their institutions. Although we share the morality of democracy in our desire to participate, we believe that our unique experience and expertise are the compelling reasons why we should be included.

Music directors, managers, and trustees are showing an increasing willingness and desire to include musician representatives in discussions and decisions affecting the artistic and financial direction of our orchestras. We must be prepared to participate effectively and responsibly. Our training and experience justify our strongly held opinions on matters affecting our art, but it will not do to simply assert these opinions dogmatically from a narrow perspective. We must be informed about the many factors operative in reaching important decisions. We must understand the appropriate framework and boundaries for acting on this information.

Accordingly, two full days at this year's ICSOM conference will be set aside for intensive examination of these two areas of vital concern to orchestra musicians.

One entire day will be devoted to artistic matters, including the selection of a music director, the selection and scheduling of guest conductors and soloists, the assets and liabilities of having a principal guest conductor. We will examine the international marketplace for conductors and soloists and its effect on American orchestras. We will discuss programming, institutional artistic policy, musical and managerial requirements and conflicts.

Another entire day will find us developing a primer of the basic financial operations of our institutions. A session on basic terminology and concepts will examine the special assets and liabilities of non-profit organizations. We will learn how to read balance sheets and audited annual statements, understand how they are organized and why they vary in format from orches-

tra to orchestra. We will examine earned and supplemental income, accumulated deficit, cash flow, and general money management. In a following session we will analyze actual budgets and examine financial case studies.

Experts from the fields of artistic and financial management will address the delegates and participate in workshops.

All of this work must be done in addition to our usual organizational activities and agenda as stated in our by-laws. Clearly we will cram a lot of work into our limited time. It is important, as always, that each ICSOM orchestra select the best representative for doing our normal conference work; *it is especially important that orchestras select delegates who will be using, at home, the special information that will come out of this year's conference.*

On to Baltimore. It should be one of our best annual conferences ever.

A MODEL FOR OTHERS

"The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians . . . deserves to be better known," says the February, 1983, newsletter of the Association for Union Democracy. The *Union Democracy Review*, which aims to promote the principles and practices of internal democracy in the American labor movement, quotes extensively from the November, 1982, *Senza Sordino* article, "What is ICSOM?," calls the American Federation of Musicians "one of our democratic unions," and cites ICSOM as "a success story for musicians and for union democracy."

An earlier issue of the *Union Democracy Review* (December, 1982) noted that *Senza Sordino* had published Sam Denov's report on his suit against the work dues increase adopted by the AFM. Denov's views were his own and not ICSOM's official position, but he was given his say. Said the *Review*, "To unions who think the labor movement will fall apart unless every union paper prints only the official line: Go thou and do likewise!"

We'll second that. Although there is often a need for a united front, any position gains strength when it grows from a balanced consideration of all sides of the issues. Let us never be afraid to voice or to heed a dissenting view, and let us thus continue to deserve attention and approval as a democratic organization.

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Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera, New Jersey Symphony, New York City Ballet, New York City Opera, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphony, National Symphony.

SOUTHERN ORCHESTRAS

Patricia Brannon, Louisville Orchestra
3739 Rough Way, Louisville, KY 40218, Phone: (502) 451-5651
Alabama Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Florida Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Philharmonic, New Orleans Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Oklahoma Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Louisville Symphony, San Antonio Symphony.

CENTRAL ORCHESTRAS

Catherine Compton, Detroit Symphony
221 E. Boston Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202, Phone: (313) 869-7367
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WESTERN ORCHESTRAS

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Denver Symphony, Honolulu Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Oakland Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, San Diego Symphony, San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony.

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION REPORT

by Carolyn Parks, ICSOM Director of Legislative Action

ICSOM orchestras are writing to tell me that they have selected members to serve as liaisons in the ICSOM legislative action program. I hope to hear from the rest of you soon as you get involved in this important program.

Orchestras may be asking what sort of work orchestra liaisons and legislative action committees will be doing. Essentially, we'll be making the voice of the orchestra musician heard by those whose legislative action affects our professional welfare and the welfare of the arts in America. To do this, we must know three things:

- We must know what is happening in local, state, and federal legislative bodies that will affect symphony orchestras;
- We must know who to contact to let the musicians' perspective be known;
- We must know how to effectively present that view, advocate action which will be in the best interests of orchestras, and encourage funding for the arts.

Where do we start? I decided to begin by finding out what other labor unions are doing in the legislative arena. As a delegate from my AFM local to the local central labor council, I have met many people from other unions who are willing to provide information and assistance. I have spoken with lobbyists for local unions, and I will soon meet with the lobbyist from our state federation of labor unions, the Maryland and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. Such meetings will help me to provide information to you on how to keep apprised on what is going on in your city councils and state legislatures.

The national offices of the AFL-CIO are here in Washington. When I visited their Legislative Department, I was excited and overwhelmed by the wealth of information available. Using their Committee on Political Education (COPE) computer, I have prepared lists of all members of ICSOM orchestras and the names of their congressional representatives. These lists will be on the way to each orchestra shortly. ICSOM will know in which congressional districts we have members, and I will be able to tell you on which committees your representatives serve and other facts about them. Orchestra liaisons should send me any additional pertinent information they learn about their congressional representatives that may be helpful and interesting to ICSOM.

Lobbying your representatives is essential. In 1981, the AFL-CIO began a grass roots lobbying program by establishing, in selected congressional districts, legislative action committees. These committees, supervised by a legislative coordinator and supplied information and material by the national AFL-CIO Legislative Department, were created to enlist the rank and file membership, as well as union officials, in legislative activity. The purposes and goals of these committees, which have been effective in influencing many of the legislators they lobby, are similar to those of ICSOM's legislative action program, and we can learn from them.

An important part of any lobbying campaign is building coalitions with other organizations. We must start working with other unions now to help us reach our legislative goals. Of the more than 20 AFL-CIO legislative action committees, at least 6 are in congressional districts where ICSOM has members. I will be contacting liaisons in these orchestras, encouraging participation in these committees.

In future articles, I will write about the tactics of lobbying: letter writing, post card and petition drives, phone call campaigns, and face to face meetings with legislators. There is a

correct format for each of these strategies and a best time to use them for maximum effect.

Grass roots lobbying does work! All of the techniques mentioned above were recently used by AFM Local 802, the New York City Opera Orchestra legislative action committee, and other arts organizations to defeat a proposed statewide admissions tax of 8.25%. Such a tax, added to already soaring prices of tickets for all arts events, would certainly have had an adverse effect on all of New York State's cultural institutions. These groups were successful because they were organized. So let's get organized! If you haven't done so, designate your legislative action liaison now and write to me, Carolyn Parks, 3730 Brandywine Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.

Those of you who have been selected should begin your activity by getting your AFM local involved. Let them know what ICSOM is doing. Ask them to introduce you to your local labor council president, and find out what the council is doing in the legislative arena. Find out what other unions have legislative departments and learn what they do. Make contact through your local with your AFL-CIO state federation. You will undoubtedly find them grateful for your interest and happy to answer questions about their legislative activities. It helps to be conversant on current issues when you talk with these people, so watch newspapers for items about the activities of your city council and state legislature.

I am positive that the more you get involved, the more you will learn and the more interested and excited you will become in the whole area of legislative action.

**Please correct your 1982-83 ICSOM directory to read:
San Diego Symphony Orchestra (Area Code 619).**

IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE

Musicians from Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and San Francisco symphony orchestras have participated in special concerts dedicated to peace and the avoidance of nuclear war. The concerts were presented with the help of Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, Inc. (MANA), a non-profit organization which provides a national group identity through which classical musicians concerned about the escalating arms race can contribute their performance to further the work of the disarmament community.

Through presentation of gala symphony concerts featuring renowned conductors and soloists and highlighting noted guests speakers including survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, MANA raised nearly \$200,000 in 1982. These funds are used to support legitimate national groups working to educate the public about the dangers of nuclear war.

Believing that classical musicians and their audience are a special group with great potential for assuring the survival of civilization and preventing the death and destruction promised by nuclear war, MANA encourages every major and regional orchestra to consider giving a gala benefit concert in its own city. Concerts in New York and Washington, D.C., have been scheduled, and musicians in other cities have also expressed interest. Further information is available from Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, 2161 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140. The MANA name may be used only with the permission of the organization.

(The editor thanks Diane Mather and Gino Raffaelli of the Cleveland Orchestra and Cleveland MANA for submitting material for this article.)