

Senza Sordino

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A NEW VISION FOR THE MET AND ITS ORCHESTRA

Sandor Balint
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

The successful settlement of a new three-year contract nine months before the expiration of the current one adds a fresh and exhilarating chapter to the history of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. The elation and joy shared by members of our orchestra and of the Met management as we simultaneously reached the Met's century mark and a high point in our relationship together added the ultimate sparkle to the 100th birthday party of the Metropolitan Opera.

Anyone familiar with the persistently troubled relationships between the Met's baronial board, representing the greatest power and wealth in America, and the Met's orchestra, a feisty and individualistic group with a "don't tread on me" attitude, would have understood why everyone was humming the hit tune of that afternoon gala, "To Dream the Impossible Dream." This unprecedented early settlement, a first for our orchestra and a first for any union in the Met's history, follows one of the most bitter fights we had ever had with the Met hierarchy: the gut-wrenching dispute of 1980, with its 11-week lockout. Not only did we achieve the four-performances-per-week provision and related benefits in those negotiations, we gained a new identity and pride, a unity and spirit with which this management knew it would have to contend in the future. Simply put, the Met Orchestra proved it could withstand the rigors of a lockout.

In early 1981 the Met management wisely began restructuring its top echelons and created a new position of assistant manager for labor relations. In this post, Mr. Joseph Volpe, a former union man himself, brought a fresh approach to our day-to-day problems and conflicts. The working relationship between orchestra and management began to improve. In a no-nonsense, forthright atmosphere, both sides began to let down barricades and to peer at each other's needs, fears, and tensions more openly.

Inevitably, our thoughts turned to the next round of negotiations, slated for 1984.

With gains in work reduction, wages, and other benefits approaching an acceptable plateau, many of us felt a major jump in pension benefits was essential in our next contract. The regular orchestra committee and a pension study subcommittee had several meetings with I. Philip Sipser, ICSOM legal counsel and an acknowledged expert on orchestra pensions. These study sessions culminated in three meetings with the management and their actuaries. Finally, at a meeting with the full orchestra in April of 1983, a report was presented by the committee and a recommendation was made that a vast improvement in pension be a top priority for our orchestra.

Simultaneously with the pension study meetings, and with the knowledge and approval of the committee, Mr. Sipser and Mr. Volpe held off-the-record discussions about the possibility of early negotiations. As a result of these meetings, the committee polled orchestra members in mid-June for opinions concern-

ing early negotiations and the needs for the next contract. Receiving orchestra approval, we made the daring decision to start negotiations one year in advance.

The orchestra committee and Phil Sipser met with management in mid-July. Both sides voiced concern about the problems of early negotiation and non-crisis bargaining: the raising of false hopes, the possible last-minute escalation of demands, and the tension resulting if it all failed. Nonetheless, we were all determined to give it a try. Ten meeting dates were set, with mid-October designated as a break-off point if negotiations were fruitless. Both sides pledged secrecy to keep the press and other groups from creating unnecessary problems.

By early October, management's counterproposals began to gel into a recognizable pattern. We targeted Tuesday, October 18, as the final day of negotiations, allowing the three following days for writing any final offer in legal terms, explaining the offer to the orchestra, and voting on the package.

It became apparent that an enormous pension increase was a real possibility. This and other proposals for the full package gave us reason to expect a successful settlement. The last round of talks ran until 5:00 A.M. on Wednesday, October 19, when we reached an agreement that elated all of us. Two days later, the orchestra ratified the contract by a dramatic secret ballot vote of 94-0. The Met and Local 802 jointly announced the settlement to the press on Friday, October 21, and Mr. Anthony Bliss, the Met general manager, announced the settlement to a worldwide television audience at the matinee gala celebration the following day.

In the new agreement, musicians retiring at age 60 with 30 years of service will receive a pension of not less than 50% of annual salary. With increased service, pension can increase to up to 60% of annual salary. In addition, senior musicians retiring during the term of the new agreement can receive a pension of up to 70% of annual salary, as much as \$36,000. By 1986-1987, normal retirement pension will amount to \$23,000 to \$25,000. These impressive improvements in pension, virtually doubling present pension figures, represent a sensational quantum leap forward.

In the final hours of negotiations, Phil Sipser, in a compelling statement, persuaded the management to relinquish the four free hours of rehearsal each week, effective January 1, 1984. Having this provision, conceded to management in 1980, eliminated before this contract has run its course represents for us the final victory in the 1980 dispute.

Having payment restored for these hours represents a 5.6 per cent wage increase this season. Along with increases of 6 per cent in each of the three contract years, the total wage increase in this package amounts to 23.6 per cent. Wages in-

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SETTLEMENT SUMMARIES

Extensive coverage of this year's negotiations and settlements has been provided to all ICSOM orchestras through the newly expanded bulletins prepared by Secretary Nancy Griffin. The *ICSOM Bulletin* serves as our rapid communications publication, conveying facts and figures to orchestras within days of major events. **Orchestras are urged to keep these bulletins for future reference.** They are an invaluable supplement to the annual AFM charts of wages and working conditions and to the annual mini-chart of wages printed in *Senza Sordino*. Our deepest admiration and thanks are expressed to Nancy for the fine work she has done in so expertly preparing and quickly disseminating these bulletins.

The information and wealth of detail contained in all the bulletins cannot be reproduced in the limited space of *Senza Sordino*. In an effort to more completely and equitably document news of negotiations in *Senza Sordino*, a summary of settlements follows. Additional information in depth will be published in future issues as provided by ICSOM delegates. Orchestra members wishing more detail are encouraged to review the bulletins as posted by their ICSOM delegates.

More than half of the ICSOM orchestras had to negotiate new contracts for the 1983-1984 season. Most orchestras settled by contract expiration deadlines or with only minor work delays. As reported in the June issue of *Senza Sordino*, the **Denver Symphony Orchestra** settled three months early as a result of unprecedented cooperation among musicians, management, and trustees. The **Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra** settlement was also reported earlier. As noted below, three orchestras endured lengthy work stoppages, and one was still on strike at press time.

A six-week strike by musicians of the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** ended on October 18. Major issues in the dispute were parity in salary with peer orchestras, seniority pay, pension, vacation, and working conditions. Management unsuccessfully tried to move the contract year to a calendar year in order to eliminate the effectiveness of any future strikes.

Wages, formerly \$455/505 plus \$25 EMG, will increase over the 3-year contract to \$525-550-620, all plus \$35 EMG. Wages in the third year may increase to \$665 (plus EMG) depending on the success of fund-raising projects which will be largely the responsibility of the musicians.

Seniority pay was gained for the first time. Players not already receiving such amounts over scale will get from \$5 for 10 years of service to \$25 for 30 years of service, payable in 5-year increments. Pension, formerly \$700 per month, increases to \$750-825-900; eligibility age comes down, 64-63-62.

A smaller number of 9-service weeks will be allowed, and such weeks must be balanced by weeks with 7 or fewer services. The service bank provision was eliminated. Improvements were made in days off and related scheduling.

Management continues to pay full instrument insurance coverage for a musician's principal instrument.

A board-union-musicians-management committee will meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern.

The **Boston Symphony Orchestra** has a new 3-year contract. Wages increase from \$700 a week to \$780-830-880. Pension increases from \$14,000 to \$17,750 by the third year.

Payment for radio broadcasts will now be made directly to musicians instead of to the pension fund. Musicians are guaranteed \$10 each week in the second year, \$20 each week in the third year. Larger payments will be made if management finds a sponsor for radio activity. The annual \$1,000 EMG was dropped from the contract.

Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians have previously had to check in at the concert hall prepared to play for every performance whether or not they were assigned to perform in that concert. In the new agreement, a joint management-musician committee will explore alternative policies. Findings are to be issued in six months. Any proposed changes will be implemented on a trial basis for one season.

Musicians of the **Buffalo Philharmonic** ratified a 3-year pact on September 25. The new agreement fell short of reinstating conditions which prevailed before the cutbacks of 1981. Season length increases from 40 to 44 weeks by the third year. Wages increase from \$455 to \$460-485-510. Pension remains at \$5,400.

Cincinnati Symphony musicians voted 75-7 on September 13 to ratify a new 3-year agreement following eleventh-hour bargaining. Wages formerly set at \$585 per week plus \$30 EMG will increase to \$635-686-715/745, all plus \$30 EMG. The present pension of \$9,000 will jump to \$14,000 in the third year for musicians retiring with 30 years of service, payable at age 62. Significantly, pensions were also improved for musicians who had already retired.

Management sought to put a ceiling on its contributions to health and welfare benefit premiums. Musicians conceded a slight reduction in benefits; management will continue to pay all premiums. Management will also pay 100 per cent of insurance on instruments used on the job and on tour.

A ratification vote of 70-29 on October 17 ended playing-and-talking negotiations for the **Cleveland Orchestra**. The former contract had expired on August 29. The new season began with three weeks of vacation; the musicians worked without a contract after September 20.

Wages, paid retroactively to August 30, increase from \$640/680 to \$720-780-840. Pension remains at \$10,000 for the first two years but jumps to \$16,000 in the third year; any musician who retires during the first two years will receive \$16,000 pension as of the third year. Seniority pay increases in the third year from \$1 to \$3 per week per year of service, payable in 5-year increments up to 20 years.

For the first time, a weekly radio fee will be paid directly to the musicians. Some money will continue to go to the pension fund as before, but musicians will collect \$25 a week for 50 weeks in the first year, increasing to \$30 and \$40 a week for 52 weeks in the second and third years.

Also new: Beginning in the third year, management will pay instrument insurance premiums for all instruments insured for the entire orchestra. Total management payment will not exceed \$15,000.

A side letter to the Cleveland contract authorizes formation of a committee of three musicians and three management representatives (including the conductor) to examine revolving string seating and audition procedures; recommendations agreed to will be implemented. The Cleveland contract also contains a "St. Louis clause:" A member in good standing is required to

pay union initiation fees, membership dues, work dues, committee dues, ICSOM dues, and other uniformly assessed special payments.

After playing and talking for 6 weeks, members of the **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** voted on October 5 to go on strike October 10. A long negotiating session on the night of October 5 led to an agreement on a new 3-year contract.

Wages increase from \$540 per week to \$590-640-691, all plus \$10 EMG. Pension goes from \$9,600 to \$13,200 in the third year for fully vested retirees. Improvements were made in working conditions, predicated on the orchestra's moving to a new concert hall in four years. With limited time in the present site, musicians were willing to help solve problems in the scheduling of days off and overtime.

Following two all-night bargaining sessions, the **Milwaukee Symphony** negotiations ended in agreement on a new 3-year contract at 4:00 A.M. on September 7. Musicians had refused to begin work on September 6 without a contract, and management canceled the rehearsal scheduled for that day in order to continue talks.

Wages increase from \$502.50 to \$552.50, \$580/607.50, and \$640/672.50. Some improvements were made which began to offset last year's concessions (see *Senza Sordino*, November, 1982). Major changes were made in the clause which allowed the cutbacks last season; musicians now have the right to strike over any changes in the contract.

A fair-share clause based on the St. Louis model requires players to pay committee dues as a condition of employment. A board-union-musicians-management committee will be formed.

The **New Orleans Philharmonic-Symphony** ratified a new 2-year agreement back in June. Season length remains at 40 weeks, and wages remain frozen at \$512.26 the first year and increase to \$543 the second year. A cap on instrument insurance was removed; unlimited coverage is paid for by management.

Musicians of the **New York City Ballet Orchestra** ratified a new 3-year contract by a 42-10 vote on November 15. Gains were made in many areas. Wages increase from \$575 to \$625-670-700. Rehearsal pay increases from \$16 per hour to \$18 in the first two years, \$20 in the third; musicians are guaranteed 75 hours of rehearsal. Guaranteed weeks of work increase from 23 plus 2 supplemental unemployment benefit (SUB) weeks to 26 weeks plus 2 SUB weeks in the first two years, 26 weeks plus 3 SUB weeks in the third.

Seniority pay, a disability and life insurance package, consultation rights in the selection of a new music director, and a comprehensive audition procedure are all new in this contract. Musicians have agreed to allow recording of all ballets in repertoire for archival use only. A St. Louis model clause requires musicians to pay orchestra and ICSOM dues.

New York City Opera Orchestra players voted 32-21 on August 29 to ratify a 3-year contract, thus ending a widely publicized strike—the longest in the company's history—which had begun on July 7. Major issues in the dispute were number of weeks of work, wages, seniority pay, and work load. Negotiations were made more difficult by management's insistence on basing its positions on a phantom year of work, a 1983 spring

season which never existed. The previous contract expired at the end of the 1981-1982 season.

Under the new pact, wages increase 6½ per cent each year from the former 1981-1982 level of \$535 to \$570-607-646. Seniority pay was gained for the first time. Starting in the third year, players will receive \$1 per week of service (no ceiling) payable in 5-year increments. The number of performances per week will be reduced from 6 to an average of 5.5 in 1985.

Musicians are guaranteed 20 weeks the first year (although nine weeks were lost due to the strike) plus 2 supplemental unemployment benefit weeks for which musicians receive half pay if additional work cannot be found. Season length increases to 22 weeks plus 4 SUB weeks the second year and 23 weeks plus 6 SUB weeks the third year. The previous contract had guaranteed 25 full weeks of work. The NYCO season now runs from the end of June to mid-November, preventing the musicians from taking any supplemental summer employment.

Musicians of the **North Carolina Symphony Orchestra** were locked out for almost all of September. Settlement on a new 3-year contract was reached on September 28. Job security was a principal issue, and while musicians were not able to retain minimum orchestra size, they did gain language which allows non-renewal for musical or disciplinary reasons only (not for financial reasons). Disputed non-renewals now go to arbitration; a committee of musicians which previously had final say now has advisory status only. Eliminated from management's unacceptable offer were repressive and regressive proposals concerning layoffs, determination and periodic redetermination of numbers of musicians and of types and numbers of services.

Wages increase from \$450 to \$468 for the current 36-week season. 32 weeks remained after the lockout; 2 weeks may be added at the end of the season for rescheduled concerts. Wages and season length for the following two years are subject to reopened negotiations which will begin in April, 1984.

Oakland Symphony musicians began work as scheduled on October 4, having ratified a new 2-year agreement by a vote of 48-17 the day before. Increases were achieved in the number of guaranteed services. Wages increased from \$56 per service to \$60 and \$62.50 per service.

Musicians of the **Oklahoma Symphony** reached a last-minute settlement on a new 2-year contract on September 6. Season length remains at 32 weeks. Wages increase from \$355 with no EMG to \$380 and \$400 with added \$20 EMG both years. Musicians achieved restrictions in a financial cancellation clause insisted upon by the board.

Instrument insurance coverage was gained for the first time, as was a benefits package: Tax-free money for instrument repair, additional health insurance, parking, and similar expenses will be paid in the amounts of \$100 per musician in the first year, \$200 the second year. Improvements were made in working conditions, touring conditions, and in matters of audition, tenure, non-renewal, and demotion procedures. A long-range planning committee, including 5 musicians and 5 board members, will be established.

The **Phoenix Symphony** enters the first year of a 3-year contract ratified back in May of 1982. Length of season, 37 weeks in 1982-1983, expands to 41 weeks by 1985-1986. Wages increase from \$295/305 to \$400-450-500. The orchestra moves to a daytime rehearsal schedule.

With rehearsals scheduled to begin on November 1, and musicians and management still far apart on some issues, **San Diego Symphony** musicians voted 51-7 on October 27 not to return to work without a contract. This show of unity generated earnest negotiating which resulted in a new 3-year pact approved by a 51-12 vote on October 31.

Season length and annual guaranteed wage increase dramatically. Wages go from \$430.16 a week to \$440-445-472.25. Season length goes from 31 weeks to 36-38-45. Annual salary thus increases from \$13,345 to \$15,840, \$16,910, and \$21,250.

Substantial changes were made in non-renewal and audition procedures. New contract items include provision for personal leave, parental leave, and payment for syndicated broadcasts. Joint study groups will be established to examine ways to protect musicians' hearing and to examine revolving string seating.

Seattle Symphony musicians must negotiate with three employers: the Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, and Pacific Northwest Ballet. Musicians agreed to begin work September 1 upon reaching tentative agreements with the Symphony and Opera, but as of October 17 went on strike against the Ballet. Updates will be forthcoming.

The **Syracuse Symphony** voted unanimously to strike as of September 12. No settlement had been reached by press time. Salary is the major issue, with musicians seeking parity with other orchestras in their budget class. Syracuse musicians have remained for three years at the same salary: \$12,684 for 42 weeks. They are the lowest-paid major orchestra in the country.

For the first time in the orchestra's history, **Utah Symphony** musicians voted to strike. The vote was taken shortly before the August 31 contract expiration. Negotiations resumed, major changes appeared in the board's thinking, and the musicians were back at work on September 6, having ratified a new 3-year pact by a vote of 76-3.

Wages increase from \$450 in half-year increments to \$450/465, \$475/490, and \$505/520. Improvements were made in scheduling of services and vacation periods. Part-time (B) contracts will be phased out, and all musicians will be on a full-

time (A) basis by the beginning of the third year. A search committee will be established to find an arts manager; the committee will include one musician. Two musicians will be included as voting members of the symphony's board of directors.

We await news from the orchestras of **Honolulu, New Jersey, Rochester,** and the **San Francisco Ballet.** Settlements will be reported in ICSOM bulletins and in *Senza Sordino*.

In a future issue, ICSOM legal counsel Phil Sipser will comment on important trends and significant achievements in this season's negotiations.

TAX CASE UPDATE

Attorneys for the Internal Revenue Service have formally advised ICSOM legal counsel that they will not appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the decision rendered by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit allowing a deduction for a home music studio used exclusively for practicing. The decision allowing this deduction stands. Musicians wishing to claim this deduction should consult with their accountants or attorneys and provide them with a copy of decision, available from each orchestra's ICSOM delegate. A summary of the case appeared in the last issue of *Senza Sordino*.

Support for the appeal for this deduction was provided by ICSOM orchestras through a special assessment.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- L.A. tries taped auditions
- A college course examines problems of performance
- An orchestra musician adds some class to the locker room

and

- THE ANNUAL MINI-CHART OF ICSOM ORCHESTRA WAGES

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WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO?

A Report by ICSOM Treasurer Melanie Burrell

In the past five years ICSOM has grown from an organization with annual dues of \$43,590 to one with an income of \$70,998 in 1982-1983 and a projected income of over \$77,000 in 1983-1984. The 47 member orchestras now pay dues ranging from \$10 to \$25 per player, depending on the guaranteed minimum annual salary level.

Each successive year, ICSOM's expenditures increase, not from inflation alone, but more significantly from the ever greater variety of activities and number of problems which must be addressed.

Expenditures from the general fund in 1982-1983 amounted to \$70,782, almost exactly the amount collected in dues. ICSOM members can see from the categories listed and explained below exactly how their dues were spent.

Legal Counsel Retainer	\$18,000	(25%)
Communications	16,200	(23%)
Meetings	7,907	(11%)
Annual ICSOM Conference	6,875	(10%)
<i>Senza Sordino</i>	6,500	(9%)
<i>ICSOM Directory</i>	6,100	(9%)
Officer Honoraria	5,000	(7%)
Special Projects	2,300	(3%)
Conductor Evaluations	1,900	(3%)
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	\$70,782	(100%)

Legal Counsel. ICSOM has retained the law firm of Sipser, Weinstock, Harper, Dorn and Leibowitz since 1968. This largest single expenditure from the treasury indicates our desire to work with a firm whose members have expertise in dealing with the singular labor problems of symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras. The firm is consulted by the officers of ICSOM and by the leaders of orchestra committees and negotiating teams of individual ICSOM orchestras. In addition, Phil Sipser and Len Leibowitz have developed and directed annual conference workshops on collective bargaining, pension and welfare, and arbitration. Their New York office is a repository for arbitration awards, collective bargaining agreements, and official ICSOM documents and publications.

Communications. The heart of our organization is, of course, the extensive and efficient system of intercommunications. Telephoning, duplicating documents, using stationery and postage are all necessary for constant contact. This category includes the many bulletins sent to orchestras, providing immediate notification of negotiations in progress, issues being debated, legislation under review, requests for support, and notices of meetings.

Meetings. Face-to-face discussions to exchange ideas are part of effectively expanding the field of influence of any organization. ICSOM's travel costs reflect the extensive cooperation and discussion within our own organization as well as with other national organizations. Officers of ICSOM meet regularly with those of the American Federation of Musicians, and ICSOM's media committee actively participates in AFM negotiations with the recording and broadcast industries. In meetings with representatives of the Major Orchestra Managers Conference, many topics of mutual concern are addressed. ICSOM officers have appeared as speakers and panelists at American Symphony Orchestra League conferences, presenting musicians' perspectives.

Our officers are actively working with these organizations to gain immediate and long-range benefits for orchestra players in ways that individual orchestras could not.

Annual Conference. Dues pay for the expenditures incurred in holding the annual ICSOM conference, attended by the delegates from each orchestra and by ICSOM's officers. This is the principal event at which the business of the organization is conducted and at which major decisions are made about policies and directions for future activities.

Senza Sordino. Our newsletter has become increasingly important as the medium through which others view us. It is the voice of the professional orchestra musician in the United States. In addition to distribution to our own members, *Senza Sordino* is in demand by music schools, libraries, foreign orchestras, music critics, arts organizations, and other interested individuals and institutions.

ICSOM Directory. Another tangible benefit is the listing of all orchestra rosters, published in alternate years and distributed to each ICSOM orchestra musician. This service has been extremely well received and resoundingly endorsed by the delegates at the ICSOM Conference.

Honoraria. \$1,000 is paid yearly to the chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary, and *Senza Sordino* editor in consideration for the time and effort these volunteers give to ICSOM.

Special Projects. This category includes such activities mandated by ICSOM delegates as contacting foreign orchestras, reviewing audition procedures, initiating a legislative action program, investigating multi-employer insurance possibilities, and investigating the needs of retired musicians.

Conductor Evaluation. This program, begun in 1967, has recently been computerized. The present system serves as an efficient data bank of comparative evaluations for use by orchestras and managements.

Every dollar ICSOM spends ultimately benefits those who provide the funds. Sometimes the returns are tangible and immediate: ready legal advice, *Senza Sordino* and bulletins, informative workshops at annual conferences. Some gains take time to achieve. It is sometimes difficult to draw the line from abstract discussions at the national level to concrete benefits for the local grass-roots constituency. It took many years of discussion and persuasion before an AFM Strike Fund and Symphony Department were established.

ICSOM can continue to work for the benefits that orchestra members want so long as the organization has the full support of its members. \$10 to \$25 a year is a pretty reasonable price to pay to have a national organization working for you.

Additional information about the services ICSOM provides and about ICSOM finances can be found in the ICSOM kit presented to each orchestra delegate at this year's annual conference.

ANNUAL ICSOM DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. EACH ORCHESTRA DELEGATE HAS BEEN SENT A SPECIFIC BILLING. DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT IS DECEMBER 31, 1983. DELAYS IN PAYMENT CAN CREATE CASH FLOW PROBLEMS, AND ICSOM TREASURER MELANIE BURRELL URGES ALL ORCHESTRAS TO REMIT DUES ON TIME.

NEW VISION FOR THE MET

(Continued from Page 1)

crease from \$734.87 to \$778.96, \$825.70, and \$875.24 for 4 performances per week. Increases in rehearsal scale will no longer be based on percentage increases in salary but will be revised substantially upward to \$19.00, \$20.50, and \$22.00 per hour during the three years. This and a guaranteed mid-winter break and personal day off are new concepts achieved in this contract. Medical, dental, and life insurance benefits were all improved. Tuxedo and instrument expense allowance was increased from \$500 to \$900 per year.

The manner in which this contract was negotiated was an enormous boost to our morale and has changed the interaction of the Met and its orchestra at every level. The good will and professionalism of both sides was a welcome change from the past. Our orchestra committee displayed resourcefulness, discipline, and a great deal of spirit and determination during trying moments. The new administration of Local 802 supported us constantly. I. Philip Sipser, as usual, showed his skill and vast experience; without his guidance neither side might have proceeded very far with these negotiations. Many thanks are due to the individual orchestra members for their faith in the committee; this was absolutely essential to our achievement.

The Met's centennial celebration was a motivating force in reaching this early settlement. Having done it once, the question almost surely follows: Is it possible to do it again? To quote William Ellery Channing, noted labor leader of the 1840's, "There are seasons in human affairs when a new and undefined good is thirsted for. There are periods when to dare is the highest wisdom."

MUSICIANS MEDICINE

Over the years, *Senza Sordino* has run articles on health hazards and medical problems related to performance in the musical profession. Tinnitus, noise-induced hearing loss, and stage fright have been explored. The considerable interest that musicians have in such occupation-related ailments was stirred again at the Baltimore ICSOM conference by Melanie Burrell's report on a 1983 convention of physicians, held in Aspen, which focused on the medical problems of musicians.

Word now comes that this exploration will be continued at a conference called "The Biology of Music Making," scheduled for July 8-12, 1984, in Denver. In addition, we have learned that a group of doctors at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, located in Denver, intends to establish a clinic specializing in medical problems of musicians.

We hope to have additional information in future issues of *Senza Sordino*.

MAFOF UPDATE

The Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowship Program has had new and encouraging interest from young musicians and orchestras alike. Three Fellows were active and in place during the 1982-1983 season. Cellists Richard Brown (Buffalo Philharmonic) and Eileen Folsom (New York Philharmonic) and violinist Karen Tidwell (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra) had very successful years with their respective host orchestras. Brown and Tidwell will continue with the program for a second year; Tidwell, however, moves to Washington, D.C., and the National Symphony Orchestra. The Atlanta Symphony maintains its participation in this program by having violinist Lesa Terry join the section. Richard Spencer, violinist, has assumed the Fellowship chair at the New York Philharmonic, and violinist Veda Kelley joined the Detroit Symphony to inaugurate its Fellowship chair. Thus, five Fellows are in place for 1983-1984, and the Detroit Symphony and National Symphony are new and welcomed additions to our roster.

The Music Assistance Fund, an independent charitable trust, was founded in 1965 for the specific purpose of encouraging talented instrumental musicians in various American minority populations to pursue professional careers in this country's symphony orchestras. The Orchestral Fellowship Program was initiated in 1976 to provide the opportunity to advanced string players to gain the highest quality experience in the performance of orchestral repertory.

The Fellowship recipient, who comes under the direct supervision of his or her section principal, attends all rehearsals and performances of the host orchestra during the regular subscription season and in turn receives all courtesies and privileges of regular orchestra members, including a stipend equal to the minimum pay scale. Membership in the appropriate union is required of all Fellows, and each orchestra must file regular reports on their progress.

Eligibility is limited to string players not under contract with orchestras designated as "Major" or "Regional" by the American Symphony Orchestra League.

The Music Assistance Fund will make a grant to a participating orchestra of up to 75% of the fellowship costs, not to exceed \$15,000.

After an initial screening, applicants are evaluated by personal interview and audition before a committee of musicians assembled by the ICSOM representative in or near the applicant's place of residence. After passing the initial audition, the prospective Fellow is recommended to a participating orchestra. A second audition before the music director and audition committee of that orchestra is then arranged, and fellowships are awarded upon their approval.

The success of this program is due in part to the valued participation of ICSOM and of the individual members and representatives who assist in the audition process. Donald Whyte (New York Philharmonic), Catherine Compton (Detroit Symphony Orchestra), Brad Buckley (St. Louis Symphony Orchestra), Donald Muggeridge (Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra), William Vaughan (National Symphony), and David Angus (Rochester Philharmonic) are gratefully acknowledged for their support and participation.

Daniel J. Windham
Director, Music Assistance Fund

Season's Greetings
from
Senza Sordino