

Senza Sordino

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Orchestra San Antonio Report

In December 1986, the Symphony Society of San Antonio announced to the musicians that its deficit would exceed \$1 million by the end of that season. The board requested that the musicians re-negotiate the final year of a 4-year agreement. Eventually, negotiations led to an ultimatum: either the musicians accept a drastic pay cut or the 1987-88 season would be canceled. The musicians refused to take the pay cut, and on February 15, 1987, the board canceled the next season.

Over the next several months, negotiations continued sporadically and to no avail. In March, Wilford Stapp, a petroleum geologist who had founded a local classical radio station, formed and incorporated Orchestra San Antonio. A board of directors, including two musicians elected by the orchestra, was assembled by the end of May.

The July 5 inaugural concert, conducted by Akira Endo, received rave reviews. Musicians agreed to manage the organization on a volunteer basis until a professional staff could be engaged. Akira Endo was named Music Advisor/Principal Conductor, and before long, OSA had booked a theater for fourteen pairs of classical concerts.

Mail and telemarketing campaigns held just weeks before the season opening on October 9 resulted in sales of over 1500 season tickets. Musicians embarked on an intensive public outreach program, providing chamber music and selling tickets in local malls, the medical center, and retirement homes. Many local labor unions bought tickets and signed a petition asking the San Antonio City Council to allocate funds for OSA. Out-of-town guests at the opening concerts included Lew Waldeck, from the AFM Symphony Department, Richard Totuseck, of the AFM International Executive Board, and several musicians from the Houston Symphony, including ICSOM delegate David Kirk. The October 12 *Time* Magazine had a story and photograph about OSA in "Business Notes."

Meanwhile, the Symphony Society of San Antonio continues various fund-raising and social activities to raise money for administrative expenses, staffing the office, and planning a season for the future.

Although ticket sales have generally been successful, starting a new organization is not easy. Many foundations, corporations, and individuals are waiting for OSA to prove itself before they donate money. The musicians of OSA are presently receiving unemployment benefits which, for many players, will last until January. The letters of encouragement and generous donations from ICSOM orchestras have helped us immensely.

Terry Franco
San Antonio ICSOM Delegate

The Association for Union Democracy

Leader Addresses 1987 ICSOM Conference

Herman Benson claims that the closest he ever came to being a musician was banging spoons on the kitchen linoleum as a child. Nonetheless, as editor of the Association for Union Democracy's newsletter *Union Democracy Review*, he was delighted when ICSOM was formed in 1962.

The Association for Union Democracy (AUD) is a non-partisan, non-political civil liberties organization which focuses on the rights of union members within their unions. These rights include free speech, free press, honest elections, and due process in trials.

Describing the labor climate of the 60's, Benson recalled, "The prevailing sentiment, even among friends of labor, was that there was something unsavory, something improper about professionals joining unions." Unions for artists were considered downright unseemly. Coming from the top musicians in the U.S., the formation of ICSOM was therefore a declaration of the value and legitimacy of unionism.

In Benson's view, the formation of ICSOM represented a unique example of unionists using their legal rights inside a democratic organization. Orchestra musicians wanted to take an active part in determining their own destinies by participating in negotiations and voting on contracts. At that time, the AFM was not fulfilling its responsibilities to the orchestra musicians. What began as a rebel movement outside the official union power structure eventually became an official union conference with considerable clout. Such a scenario could occur only in a union with a strong democratic tradition. While acknowledging the problems symphony and opera musicians have with the Federation regarding work tax, recording contracts, etc., Benson pointed out that we are well off compared to many other unions in this country. For example, in some other unions, a movement such as ICSOM would be squelched, with the perpetrators being blacklisted, fined, expelled, or worse.

Operating with a staff of five and a budget of around \$100,000, the AUD draws on a national network of attorneys and unionists, who often provide services *pro bono*. Examples of situations in which the AUD has come to the aid of union members include corruption in union elections and pension contributions, and defense of members expelled or disciplined unfairly. The organization publishes a bi-monthly newsletter and other literature on union democracy. The address for membership and information is: AUD, 30 3rd Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217, phone 718-855-6650. Please respect the AUD policy, according to Benson: "We never accept any money unless it is offered to us."

D.T.

It Shouldn't Hurt to be a Musician

Last September 19-20, a conference co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Orchestra brought together performers, teachers, and medical professionals. Organized by Minnesota Orchestra cellist Janet Horvath, "Playing Hurt" explored medical problems of musicians. (Sessions which covered the learning process in music, training in conservatories, and danger signs in the music student are beyond the scope of this article.)

The following summaries are representative of the concerns of teachers, performers, and music medicine professionals.

- Alice Brandfonbrener, M.D.; Director, Medical Program for Performing Artists, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago

Aspects of a musician's life-style that take a toll on health include competition; touring; being on a schedule different from the rest of the world; the isolation necessary for practicing; economic pressures; and lack of time for exercise or rest.

It is important to get help early in an injury and to allow adequate recovery time. Financial support and leave should be available; management should respect its investment in the musicians. Steps should be taken to work the music medicine clinics into insurance packages. Promoting health and longevity in players is not anti-economic!

- Robert Leffert, M.D.; Chief, Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital

A musician should avoid surgery unless the condition is conclusively diagnosed and would worsen and be permanent without the operation. It is very important to discuss with the doctor how the diagnosis and treatment will affect musical performance. Conditions which Dr. Leffert termed "surgical mousetraps" include junctura tendina, ganglion, vague aches and pains, and focal dystonia.

Dr. Leffert noted that people with shoulder pain are often diagnosed as having bursitis. However, a condition called rotator cuff syndrome may be present, and can be diagnosed by a special X-ray called an arthrogram. If not treated, the condition can worsen and ultimately cost use of the shoulder.

Following medical evaluation, an important part of treating a musician involves seeing the patient at the instrument. The advice of musical colleagues and teachers is helpful.

Some of the ways players accommodate to their problems are to stop playing, refinger, or change their practice routine, repertoire, or technique.

- Richard Lederman, M.D.; Director, The Center for Performing Artists, Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Overuse syndrome occurs when a tissue is subjected to too much biological stress, and can be brought on by a single incident (acute) or repetitive action (chronic). Chronic overuse is insidious and dangerous. The recovery period often requires as long as the condition took to develop.

Muscle pain, often in the forearm, wrist, or hand, is the most common presenting complaint. Distinguishing which tissue is at fault and what is causing the overuse syndrome may be difficult. Tight muscles are definitely more prone to injury.

Factors that contribute are: structural limits or abnormality; inadequate strength or flexibility; inadequate conditioning; sudden increase in practice time or intensity; change in technique or instrument; and psychological

stress or tension. Dr. Lederman noted that there are many controversies concerning overuse syndrome terminology and treatment.

- Kyle Pruett, M.D.; Yale Child Study Center

Anxiety is a motivational force in our lives and is not itself pathological. Performance anxiety manifests itself in a person in the same manner other anxieties do. Anxiety worsens under the following circumstances:

- * When performance is too closely tied to self-esteem
- * In front of highly critical judges or artistic experts
- * When a perfect performance (not making music) is the goal
- * With more difficult musical material, especially by memory
- * If the musician feels unprepared
- * In intense competition for few places

Dr. Pruett noted that beta-blockers do not eliminate anxiety, but merely inhibit certain physical manifestations of it. To cope with the psychological element of anxiety, he suggests musicians accept that performance anxiety is part of the performing process and prepares the body for an unusual event. Visualize the concert event; develop small, calming rituals using relaxation techniques and de-sensitization.

Stress needs to be addressed throughout a person's musical life, not only in a crisis. One of the worst stress factors is "loneliness in the group." As a means of coping with stress, Dr. Pruett emphasized the need for involvement in other interests and time off from music.

- James Friction, D.D.S.; Associate Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Minnesota

Dr. Friction discussed the symptoms, diagnosis, and range of disorders that affect the jaw joint and the facial muscles. The best preventive measures are a proper balance of the muscles and reduction in strain on the area. Symptoms can include jaw pain, headaches, earaches, tinnitus, unsteadiness, and facial pain. Temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ) ranges in severity from occasional clicking and locking to permanent degenerative changes and pain. TMJ can be treated with surgery, exercise, and medication.

Muscle problems may include pain, spasm, and contractions. Diagnosis is difficult and is related to overuse. Treatment includes exercise, physical therapy, injections or acupuncture, rest, and splinting.

Other medical presenters at the conference included musculo-skeletal expert Jennine Speier, M.D. of Minneapolis, hand therapist Dore Naunton of Northwestern Memorial, and bio-engineer David Preves, Ph.D., who discussed hearing loss and sound level barriers.

Performers and teachers were represented by Karen Tuttle, violist, Dee Stewart, trombonist, and Loren Hollander, pianist. All advocated a natural approach, balancing the body at the instrument, and relaxation to allow coordination and easy breathing. Workshops on yoga and the Alexander technique showed the musician how to identify sources of tension and learn relaxation.

"Playing Hurt" was the first music medicine conference co-sponsored by a university and a major orchestra. If the enthusiastic evaluation from the 400 people who attended is any indication, there will be future conferences of musicians and medical professionals.

Settlement Summaries

(Complete descriptions appear in ICSOM bulletins.)

New Orleans: 2-year agreement ratified in June covering 1986-88. A second ratification requested in August to start season five weeks late because the board had decided to postpone marketing until agreement ratified. Number of weeks cut from 38 (in 85-86) to 36, 33. Wages frozen at 85-86 level, \$543. Orchestra reduced from 80 to 75 musicians. Retirement bonus: a player with 25 years of service at age 60 will receive retired bonus of \$10,000. Business leave of 3 days now paid and guaranteed to all players. Improvements in audition procedures, rotation of time off, leave of absence procedures, and string rotation. Note: during 1986-87 season, the players continued to work even when management was six weeks behind in paying them.

Phoenix: ratified a 3-year agreement June 8. Season (was 41 weeks) cut to 39, 39, 40 weeks. Number of players (was 81) not fewer than 78 for 2 years, with all principal and associate principal positions filled; not fewer than 81 during third year. Wages (were \$500) will be \$540, 556, 575. If there is a deficit of less than \$25,000 during the 87-88 season, musicians may re-open 3rd year wage negotiations. Seniority (new) in second year for all players who have completed 10 full seasons; in third year for all who have completed 5 full seasons. Establishment of pension plan; Association to contribute in third year. Life insurance increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Disability and dental insurance added. Improvements in leave. Revolving seating added in string sections. Acoustical protection clause allows musicians to request up to \$5,000 worth of protection per season.

National: ratified a 3-year agreement on June 12. Wages (were \$840) will be \$880, 920, 950/980; all plus \$20 EMG. Seniority remains at \$7/week/year of service to a maximum of 20 years. Pension (\$16,000) maximum benefit increases in third year to \$19,000. Eligibility for retirement now includes "rule of 85" (total of age plus years of service 85) and "30 and out" (30 years of service). Disability insurance increases to 2/3 of musician's monthly salary with a \$5,000 cap. Improvements in service/workload. All language concerning artistic advisory committee deleted from contract.

Denver: ratified a 3-year agreement on June 14. Wages (were \$626.40) frozen for first year, then go to \$636.93/677.27, 677.27/697.59. Pending passage of a ballot issue creating a Cultural Arts Tax District, the third year salary would be 697.59/737.59. Pension (management did not contribute during 86-87) gradually reinstated to the 10% level which it had been before concession bargaining. Instrument insurance now paid by management up to \$20,000 per musician. Improvements in service/workload. Musicians elected by orchestra to vote on search committees. *Force majeure* clause modified so that Association will not have right to cancel entire agreement, but only such portions of season as are required by existing exigency.

Chicago Lyric: ratified 3-year agreement July 2. Guaranteed weeks: (formerly 20) 21. Wages (were \$890) now \$930, 985, 1,040. Health insurance now paid for entire year, with monthly premium cap of \$85, 93, and 103 for three years of contract. Orchestra adds one player in third year. Improvements in days off; diffused overhead lighting in the pit; adequate security when rehearsals held outside Opera House.

Houston: 1-year agreement ratified July 13, after playing and talking 6 weeks. Players agreed to contribute \$1000 each to a Musicians' Security Fund for future negotiations. Wages: with several increases over the year, weekly salary will eventually reach \$710, the level before concession bargaining in 1986. Seniority pay will be restored in February '88 to all players. One of the four positions that had been cut will be re-established. The Society has hired William Hembree (Health Research Institute) to evaluate current health plan and make recommendations. Musicians now have 2 personal leave days with pay; advancement tenure after 3-month probation. Many improvements in service/workload.

San Francisco Opera: 3-year agreement ratified September 10. Wages (were \$920) will be \$970, 1,020, 1,070. Length of season (was 20 guaranteed weeks, but 6 weeks canceled in 1986-87) will be 20, 22, 24 weeks. New provisions for overtime; EMG will be \$2,800 over 3-year contract. Improvements in dental insurance; Association to engage William Hembree as consultant to study possible improvements in health coverage. Instrument insurance increased; provision for instrument loan program; improvements in: scheduling, sick leave, tours and runouts, breaks. Commitment to study feasibility of expanding and improving pit. New artistic advisory committee; two joint (musician/board/management) committees to work on expanding employment opportunities. Musicians can now authorize paycheck deductions for union, ICSOM, and orchestra dues and assessments.

Syracuse: ratified a 2-year agreement September 13. During negotiations, the orchestra was without an executive director, and the board was unwilling to commit to further growth. Wages (were \$511) will be 531, 552. Part-time players also received a 4 % wage increase. Weeks remain at 44. Increase in seniority pay: \$10 and 15; dental insurance will now be paid for families as well as employees. New provisions: minimum of five 5-day work weeks; limitations on length of performances. Rehearsal break increased. Minor changes in scheduling, chamber ensemble services.

St. Paul Chamber: 3-year agreement ratified September 17. Season remains 40 weeks. Wages (were \$875.75) go to \$895, 935, 975. New provision for EMG (\$800, 1,000, 1,200 annually). New provision for seniority pay starting in third year. Dental insurance premiums now fully paid. New provisions for leaves, wardrobe allowance, solo pay, string relief. More advance notice of scheduling. Changes in structure of review committee. Limits on acoustical rehearsals, runouts; tour improvements; practice facility clause (for tax deduction) states in contract that each musician required to maintain a practice room; 2 musicians on personnel manager interview committee.

Los Angeles: 3-year agreement ratified October 1. Wages (were \$910) go to \$970/980, 1,020, 1,040/1,060. EMG \$2,000 per year. Premium pay for ensembles (2-24 players) during regular symphony concert. Increases in vacation, pension, retiree medical insurance; improvements in employee medical, dental, life, tour, and instrument insurance. Pay increases for sabbatical leave, severance, and extra services. Improvements in service/workload, time off, touring, and per diem. Audition and renewals committee voting procedure increases voting power of musicians.

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Settlement Summaries

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Rochester: ratified a one-year agreement October 20; essentially an extension of last year's contract while musicians negotiate an additional 2-year package. Wages remain at \$581, with 47 weeks to be paid this year. Other change from previous contract is a cap on health insurance premiums. Currently, a cafeteria-style benefits plan is being explored. Note: 5 weeks of the present season were lost to imposed unemployment and a lockout.

Philadelphia: 3-year agreement ratified November 2, after 6-week extension of previous contract. Increases are retroactive. Wages (were \$950) will be \$1,000, 1,020/1,040, 1,060/1,100. Pay for seniority, radio broadcast fees, and extra services increased. One week of vacation added and pension increased during third year. Improvements in medical insurance, psychiatric coverage, dental insurance, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Long-term disability insurance increased, eligibility for same expanded. Instrument insurance increased to \$100,000 per player. Sabbatical leave: increase in players allowed time off; increase in optional unpaid free weeks. Professional development leave allows up to 3 months away (unpaid but benefits continue) to pursue education, concertizing, festivals, etc.

News Capsules

The Florida Orchestra (Tampa) is a new member of ICSOM. The orchestra recently doubled AFM membership among its players.

The Toledo Symphony has left ICSOM and joined the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA).

Lynn Larsen has resigned as ICSOM President in order to accept the position of Personnel Manager with the Boston Symphony. ICSOM by-laws call for the chairperson to assume the president's duties. Melanie Burrell has appointed Governing Board Member Tom Hall to serve as special assistant until elections for the five executive offices are held at the 1988 ICSOM conference.

By-law Changes Passed

ICSOM orchestras recently voted on a dues increase and a change in the Emergency Relief Fund by-laws: Both passed by a wide margin. The dues structure will now be as follows:

Players' Salaries	Dues
Below \$16,000:	\$20
\$16,000-22,999:	25
23,000-39,999:	30
40,000-above:	38

Dues should be paid by December 31 in care of Florence Nelson, ICSOM treasurer.

The ERF by-law has been amended to include orchestras which are in a crisis situation other than strike or lock-out; loans will be interest-free for one year from the date of resolution of the crisis.

Can We Talk?

The liaison committee includes the five executive officers of ICSOM (chairperson, president, secretary, treasurer, and editor) and representatives of the Major Orchestra Managers Conference (MOMC). The most recent meeting took place in Chicago on November 16, 1987. During the past year, the liaison committee has addressed a number of concerns of the ICSOM constituency.

In studying health care cost containment, the liaison committee has consulted William Hembree, Director of the Health Research Institute, who spoke at the 1986 ICSOM conference. A plan and contract are now in place for Hembree to proceed with the necessary study to reduce health care costs.

The ICSOM medical questionnaire was jointly funded by ICSOM, MOMC, and the AFM. In 1987, the initial data analyzed by Drs. Fishbein and Middlestadt was first published in the August issue of *Senza Sordino*. ICSOM executive officers are now contacting music medicine physicians to determine additional uses for the information gathered during the study.

Reflecting the concern expressed at the 1986 conference about the ways in which taped resumes are being used, ICSOM did research about audition processes in our orchestras. We brought the issue of taped resumes, as well as the audition code of ethics, to the liaison committee for review.

Another major topic has been excessive sound levels on stage and in the pit. Two years ago, the liaison committee began meeting with experts in the field. A study to measure sound levels and the effect of various barriers will begin soon in Chicago.

The projects undertaken in the liaison committee require considerable time, effort, and funding. The process has been effective for accomplishing what ICSOM can not do alone.

D.T.

As We Go To Press

Detroit Symphony--locked out since Sept. 21.

Oklahoma Symphony--on strike since Oct. 7.

Orchestras currently negotiating include: St. Louis, Kennedy Center Opera House, San Francisco Ballet, New York City Ballet.

Happy Holidays

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