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## Restructuring the AFM Will Orchestras Play Along?

Any orchestra activist with an ear close to the ground is hearing the rumble of the American Federation of Musicians restructuring posse heading our way. Articles appear in every issue of the *International Musician*; major locals hold conferences on the subject, and the phone lines hum with the lobbying of AFM officers.

Could restructuring the AFM make a difference to symphonic musicians? Should we even care?

Nobody denies that the AFM has very serious problems, both short-term and long-term. The most pressing symptom of those problems is the Federation's current critical financial condition. But the AFM's lack of cash does not stem from ICSOM's membership; our members are paying their membership and work dues to their locals. Some locals are choosing not to forward what they owe to the AFM, but it's not because they're not getting the money from the symphony musicians or because they're spending too much on servicing those musicians. In most locals, a small fraction of what the local keeps in symphonic work dues is needed to service those musicians' negotiation and administration needs. Any local with an ICSOM orchestra that's collecting even the Federation-mandated minimum of 1% work dues is almost certainly collecting far more than they're spending on their symphony musicians' specific needs.

The shrinking membership base is widely perceived as the AFM's biggest underlying problem; but, even if that's the case, it's not orchestra musicians that the union is losing. In fact, some locals have been very successful in organizing orchestras; the national has organized some orchestras, such as Green Bay; and there are musicians in other orchestras (such as the New World Symphony) that want to be organized. Where the AFM's symphonic musicians and their institutions do well, the locals do well, too. Every contract advance we make benefits the local in the form of additional work dues revenue.

Symphony musicians have the same needs from their union as they always have: economic well-being and job security. But the symphonic workplace is under a new kind of attack. Orchestras have been getting an avalanche of bad press, the public perception of symphonies as successful institutions is being steadily eroded, and more and more communities are beginning to question whether they need a symphony in their town and whether it needs to pay so well. And managements, in turn, use such questioning as a new weapon in their eternal quest to reduce the "orchestra compensation" line item in their budgets.

Thirty years ago, what symphonic musicians needed from their

union was organizing and negotiating. When we didn't get it from our locals, we went out and hired it. Now, we have decent contracts in many of our orchestras. We earn a living wage; we have tenure, we have health and welfare benefits. What we don't have anymore is the assurance that our institutions are going to stay alive to provide us with what we've won at the table. What we need now is help, not just at the bargaining table, but also with our ongoing relationship with our boards and communities. The kinds of things we need now to protect our jobs are things that we can't do as orchestra committees or player conferences. The only organization that can do what needs doing at this point in our history is a real union.

What kinds of services do we need now from our union? Perhaps the question can best be answered by looking at the resources that could be, and ought to be, available to help us. An informal calculation (the only kind possible, given the current state of record-keeping in the AFM) indicates that symphonic musicians as a group pay over \$6 million a year to the AFM and its locals. The actual figure may well be considerably higher. Of that \$6+ million, perhaps \$2 million is spent on direct services by the AFM and locals to symphony musicians – around \$1 million on the AFM's Symphonic Services Division and perhaps \$1 million by the locals on negotiating and administering our collective bargaining agreements.

What could be done with the other \$4 million that we pay to our union? First of all, to provide a sense of scale, \$4 million is more than the annual budget of the American Symphony Orchestra League. Such a sum, if spent by our side on our needs, could have at least the same impact on our field as has the ASOL's budget – although of a very different kind. \$4 million a year could provide

*(continued on next page)*

### In This Issue

<b>Restructuring the AFM . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Resurrection in Alabama and San Diego . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ICSOM Wage Chart . . . . .</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Atlanta Strike . . . . .</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>San Francisco Strike . . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CSO Alumni Association . . . . .</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ICSOM Financial Report . . . . .</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Editors on Art &amp; Civilization . . . . .</b>	<b>12</b>

(continued from page 1)

serious and sustained financial monitoring of our institutions that could help us spot trouble coming, rather than just get run over by it. It could provide a serious public relations effort mounted on behalf of our workplaces. It could provide a serious political presence in key political campaigns. It could provide monitoring of managers. It could provide real training of officers, shop stewards, and other AFM staff, so that we're not all learning basic unionism *after* our institutions get torpedoed, as invariably happens now. It is no exaggeration to say that \$4 million, well-spent on these kinds of efforts, could save our institutions from becoming part-time orchestras or disappearing entirely.

There is no more legitimate trade union mission than saving union members' jobs. Institutions have failed, and our colleagues put of work, because this kind of help wasn't provided by our union.

So where does that \$4 million go, if not to help us keep our jobs? We know it's not going to provide overpaid union officers with vacations in the sun; no one in the AFM is making a lot of money. The problem really *is* structural. The AFM works essentially the same way it did 100 years ago. But what worked when all music was live, when there were no multinational corporations and no labor law, radios, televisions, cars, computers, or airplanes, simply doesn't work anymore. The world is too complex, and our adversaries too large, for all but a handful of AFM locals even to begin to cope. Under the current system, local officers need to be experts on labor law, dues collectors, recruiters, desktop publishers, accountants, managers – and, in their spare time, try to provide member services. Is it any wonder that most locals are dead in the water?

The key to success in any enterprise, be it union, business, football team, or orchestra, is *focus*. Yet the structure of the AFM makes focusing on the needs of its members virtually impossible; there are too many boundaries, too much duplication of effort, too little accountability to the working musician, and far too much bureaucracy. The single biggest cost of business of the AFM, considered as a whole, is collecting dues. The second biggest is internal governance. Direct trade union services to members comes a pretty distant third. That's not because anyone in the AFM wants it that way; it's because the current structure dictates that outcome.

The fundamental premise of the AFM, which is that of smaller self-governing units of musicians under a national umbrella, could still work. But what musicians have most in common, in the waning years of the 20th century, is not where they live, but **where they work**. Symphony musicians in New York City have far more in common with symphony musicians in Omaha than they do with club-date musicians in their local; and the same is true for club-date musicians in New York City as well. We need to rethink what a "local" should be. The Federation has already recognized the concept of a non-geographic local in chartering Local 1000, the Traveling Musicians' Local. Why not Local 2000; an AFM local that is governed and funded by symphony musicians and that embraces all the symphonic musicians in the AFM? Perhaps that could, in turn, be a model for non-geographic locals for club-date musicians, which could specialize in helping them with their specific needs; or for theater musicians and for musicians traveling and working under

Pamphlet B. This one concept could return democracy, accountability, and efficiency to the AFM.

But until a new structure is put into place, symphonic musicians need immediate reform from their union. ICSOM believes that the first step the AFM needs to take is to fully implement the Roehl Report and Blue Ribbon Panel report of 1990 in three key areas.

1. The clear and explicit intent of the two reports was to formally involve the heads of the three symphonic player conferences in the governance and direction of SSD, functioning, with the President as a fourth member of the SSD Steering Committee, essentially as an SSD executive board. This simply has not happened in a meaningful way. Without a formal role in SSD budgeting and operational planning, the SSD Steering Committee is just a box on an organization chart. Too many key decisions about SSD – including the closing of the Colorado Springs office last year and the recent decision of the IEB not to allow OSP orchestras to use outside negotiating counsel – have been made without the input or even the knowledge of the SSD Steering Committee.

2. Symphonic work dues must go to fund symphonic services. The financial problems of the Federation are in no way the fault of symphony musicians, and the solutions to those problems must not come at the expense of services to those musicians. We need far more than the AFM and its locals are providing now. We know that we need to be a part of the solution to the Federation's problems and stand willing to do that, but the use of what the AFM's own annual report describes as "SSD work dues" to subsidize the rest of the AFM has got to end. Only 83 cents of every dollar of SSD work dues actually pays for direct SSD expenses – the rest leaks out into overhead and to subsidize union activities that we've already paid for with our per-capita dues.

3. Consideration of AFM restructure must include the realization of the Blue Ribbon panel's recommendation to the IEB to "intensify the investigation of trade divisions for symphony and recording musicians." The IEB committed itself to that recommendation in 1990. Since then, *nothing* has happened.

ICSOM is ready to be a part of the solution to the AFM's problems, but those solutions must address the fact that we can no longer subsidize an archaic and obsolete union structure. The bylaws of the AFM state that this century-old union is devoted to "elevating and bettering the economic status, social position, and general welfare" of its members. Our need for such help from our union has never been greater. The consequences of failing to provide such help may well prove disastrous for both symphonic musicians and the union that has been their home for 100 years.

Robert Levine  
ICSOM Chair

# Resurrection?

## Court Rulings Rekindle Hope in Alabama and San Diego

Embers still glow, it seems, in the ashes of the bankrupt Alabama and San Diego Symphonies. Both orchestras, silenced by bankruptcy proceedings, now have an opportunity for a new beginning, thanks to the tenacity of courageous musicians who took their solidarity from the concert stage to the bargaining table to the courts. Signs are that such determination may be bringing these musicians back full-circle to the concert stage again.

### *San Diego*

On January 27, 1997 Chief Bankruptcy Judge Louise Adler, granting a motion filed by the San Diego Symphony musicians, approved conversion of the San Diego Symphony's Chapter 7 liquidation bankruptcy to Chapter 11 reorganization. The immediate effect of this action is to stop the sale of the symphony's assets, particularly its music library and Copley Symphony Hall.

The musicians put together a financial recovery plan and suggested Thomas F. Lennon as the "responsible officer" to oversee the reorganization. Mr. Lennon was then appointed by Judge Adler to the post. The reorganization plan hinges on a \$2 million donation from San Diego businessman Larry Robinson. Robinson's contribution is intended to cover the Symphony's past debts, allowing the revived orchestra to start with a clean slate. Another important player in rebuilding the orchestra is Bank of America, which has agreed not to demand payment on a \$2.1 million note it holds on Copley Symphony Hall.

The reorganization plan, attributed mostly to the musicians, seems to be encountering no serious opposition so far. Even the former president of the symphony board, Elsie Weston, said, "I'm pleased with the judge's decision." Although the musicians have been identified as the leaders in this reorganization process, Theodore Graham, an attorney for the musicians, said, "It will be a community effort" of the musicians, donors, the new board and the old board. John L. Smaha, attorney for Robinson Family Trust, said, "The real key here is that the Robinson plan is just a catalyst. They still need many more donors. Most people didn't want to put money into something to take care of past problems. Larry took care of those, so now anyone who wants to give can now give to the future."

More advice for rebuilding comes from *San Diego Union Tribune* critic Welton Jones. "This time, the board-building must be top quality from the beginning. Whatever warned the first string away from the symphony in the past must now be ignored. This is too good a chance to do the thing right. Very soon in the reorganization process, the musicians should return to their instruments while the superboard finds the necessary professional management and restores the proper artist-administration balance. The musicians should crash into an overture, sharing their early victories, humanizing themselves, celebrating our new opportunities, inviting everybody aboard and kick-starting the emotional response that's so much a part of music anyhow. . . We've found our heroes. Now we need leaders."

### *Alabama*

On October 3, 1996, the Birmingham Musicians' Protective Association, Local 256-733 of Birmingham, Alabama, won its appeal of the 1993 U.S. Bankruptcy Court decision that allowed the Alabama Symphony Association to reject its collective bargaining agreement with Local 256-733. The importance of this case to all orchestras is articulated by the local's Secretary-Treasurer Michael Bradt, "We thought this precedent-setting decision could have national ramifications if other managements threaten bankruptcy because the musicians didn't meet their demands."

The trouble in Alabama surfaced in 1992, when the Alabama Symphony sought to restructure its debt of about \$1.7 million with its lenders. The restructure was granted, but at the cost of a balanced budget requirement and other restrictive conditions placed on the symphony by the lenders. As a result, the symphony management began to seek mid-contract concessions from the musicians in salary, benefits, season length and orchestra size. When the musicians refused to vote on the proposed cuts, the management withheld musicians' paychecks due on September 15, 1992.

Payments to the musicians were resumed after the musicians filed a charge with the NLRB, but in January 1993, management offered another cuts proposal. This time the musicians took a vote and rejected the proposal. Management said in effect, "Keep voting until you get it right," but the musicians refused to reconsider their vote. The next day, January 19, 1993, the Symphony filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition. On May 17, 1993, the Bankruptcy Court found that the Symphony was entitled to reject their collective bargaining agreement, and on November 19, 1993 entered an order converting the Chapter 11 bankruptcy to Chapter 7.

In her recent decision on the musicians' appeal, U.S. District Judge Sharon Blackburn ruled that "allowing a rejection of the CBA is improper when the debtor has unilaterally ceased performing its obligations under the CBA prior to seeking court permission to modify or reject the CBA. The court notes that in the present case, the debtor apparently failed to perform in full its obligations under the CBA even prior to filing under Chapter 11 on January 19, 1993, as evidenced by its failure to pay the musicians the full amount of wages due on January 15, 1993." As a result of the successful appeal, the musicians of the old Alabama Symphony will receive back pay for the last two weeks of the 1992-93 season.

A new corporation has been formed to operate a new orchestra in Birmingham, and negotiations are now in progress for a proposed 1997-98 season. The new orchestra has already garnered \$10 million in pledges for a new endowment, which indicates a positive new way of thinking and bodes well for the orchestra's long-term success.

Because of the long battle in court that was necessary to achieve this reversal, Local 256-733 is deeply in debt. Contributions may be sent to the Alabama Symphony Musicians Legal Defense Fund, 715 6th St. SW, Birmingham AL 35211-1640.

**1996-97 Wage Chart of ICSOM Orchestras**  
*compiled by Stephanie Tretick*

Orchestra	Weeks 96-97	Annual Minimum Salary	Seniority: 40-yr Cap if no max	EMG	Pension: 40-yr Cap if no max	Pension Type	Pension Based on pers/min	Average Services Weekly	Vacation Weeks
Atlanta	52	44,310	45,990	2310	25,000	AFM-EP	m	8	8
Baltimore	52	56,420	60,580	none	19,500			8	8
Boston	52	77,480	81,900	none	43,000			8	10
Buffalo	34	25,694	26,884	1506	3%	AFM-EP	m+EMG	8	none
Chicago Lyric	24	35,400	36,816	none	9%	AFM-EP	p	7-8	15% of base
Chicago	52	78,520	86,073	none	48,000			7.5	8
Cincinnati	52	65,130	67,210	2860	22,000+3.5%/bs	AFM-EP	m	8	9
Cleveland	52	75,918	84,238	none	36,000			8	9
Colorado	41	28,577	30,217	4100	7%	AFM-EP/DCP	p	8	4
Columbus	46	41,256	42,176	none	7.50%	DCP	p	8	4
Dallas	52	55,770	57,850	6760	23,040			8	9
Detroit	52	71,900	73,980	2000	24,000			8	9
Florida Orch	34	23,290	24,650	170	3%	AFM-EP	p	8	2
Florida Phil	41	32,000	33,025	none	8%	AFM-EP	m	8	3
Grant Park	Not available								
Honolulu	24	17,177	17,837	none	5%	AFM-EP	p	8	none
Houston	53	62,820	64,145	4505	25,000			8	9
Indianapolis	52	52,520	55,640	none	28,800			8	8.5
Kennedy Center	21	27,874	29,974	none	7%	AFM-EP	p	4.125% of personal scale	
Los Angeles	52	77,480	81,640	2000	5%	AFM-EP	m	8	9
Louisville	Not available								
Met Opera	52	87,750	87,750	none	60%		p	4+rehs	10
Milwaukee	44	46,244	47,636	none	6%	AFM-EP	p	8	6
Minnesota	52	67,860	69,420	2860	30,000			8	8.5
National	52	70,113	81,384	none	35000			8	8
New Jersey	32	26,400	27,200	800	8.50%	AFM-EP	m	7	2
North Carolina	40	30,800	31,760	none	8%	403(b)	m	8	4
New York Phil	52	78,520	84,144	none	43,000			8	9
NYC Ballet	30	40,160	42,785	none	12%/gross	AFM-EP	p	6 perf	4
NYC Opera	29	31,610	33,930	none	10%	AFM-EP	p	5	4
Oregon	43	33,523	33,523	none	8.5%	AFM-EP	p	7	2.5
Philadelphia	52	78,000	83,720	none	43,500			8	10
Phoenix	35	21,700	23,100	none	3%	403(b)	m	8	2
Pittsburgh	52	63,960	67,080	none	35,000			8	10
Rochester	40	30,400	31,360	none	2%	DCP	m	8	3
Saint Louis	52	63,440	67,340	none	28,000			8	9
Saint Paul Chmbr	38	48,799	50,099	1200	'93 \$ amount	403(b)	p	8	3
San Antonio	39	27,300	28,860	none	6%	AFM-EP	p	7	3
San Diego	In Chapter 11 reorganization								
SF Ballet	21	24,203	25,441	1069	10%	AFM-EP	p	6.5	12% of base
SF Opera	29	49,370	50,170	1720.2	8.50%	AFM-EP	p	6+rehs	4
SF Symphony	Not available								
Syracuse	37	22,355	22,955	none	0.004	private	p	7.5	4
Utah	52	38,532	40,092	none	8%	AFM-EP/403(b)	m	8	9

**1996-97 Wage Chart of ICSOM Orchestras (cont.)**  
*compiled by Stephanie Tretick*

Orchestra	Relief Weeks	Notes
Atlanta	8 services for strings, 2nd wind/brass	Salary reflects 10-week work stoppage. AFM-EP will be instituted in 97-98.
Baltimore	16 services	
Boston	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	
Buffalo	none	Overtime not included in salary. Radio: 8.5% of scale X 39 wks in 1996-97.
Chicago Lyric	1 opera relief, prin & asst.prin	
Chicago	2, plus 1 subscription & 2 summer programs	
Cincinnati	16 services for strings	
Cleveland	none	
Colorado	7 personal services	
Columbus	6 services personal leave	Add'l relief: 2svc/yr/5yrs sen., up to 8 svc/yr. EMG includes radio.
Dallas	12 string services	
Detroit	8 services for strings & 2nd winds	
Florida Orch	none	Annual "in residence adjustment" of \$800 is in addition to salary.
Florida Phil	12 svcs for strings, prin & 2nd winds & 2nd brass	
Grant Park		
Honolulu	none	Salary includes both Symphony and Opera employment
Houston	none	
Indianapolis	8 svcs stg/1&2ww/prin brss/2nd hn,tpt/timp	
Kennedy Center	none	Season under 2 contracts: opera and ballet/musical.
Los Angeles	+ 1 week strings, 2nd winds	
Louisville		
Met Opera	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	Salary includes avg reh pay. Add'l Radio agreement: 21 broadcasts @ \$239.48.
Milwaukee	8 services	
Minnesota	6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings	
National	1 week + 1 week for strings	+ 2wks Supp. Unemployment Ben = \$1700. Salary + 4 optional summer weeks = \$33,880.
New Jersey	none	
North Carolina	4 services personal leave	
New York Phil	1 of the 9 vacation weeks	All players currently receive \$20/wk overscale.
NYC Ballet	none	
NYC Opera	none	
Oregon	none	
Philadelphia	1 of the 10 vacation weeks + 4 personal days & 2 days at Saratoga	
Phoenix	none	
Pittsburgh	11th deferred service week possible	Figures are tentative based upon outcome of current negotiations. 2 extra wks vac possible by volunteer work in Comm. Partnrshp Prog.
Rochester	none	
Saint Louis	1 of the 9 vacation weeks	
Saint Paul Chmbr	95-97: 1 relief week for all	'94-97 wages will reflect COLA, which cannot be computed in advance.
San Antonio	none	
San Diego		
SF Ballet	none	Yearly contract guarantee = 105 perfs. + 102 rehs. Vacation is in addition to 25 season weeks
SF Opera	1 opera every other season for strings	
SF Symphony		
Syracuse	none	
Utah	none	

## Atlanta Strike Holds Downsizeers At Bay

The musicians of the Atlanta Symphony returned to work on December 4, 1996, after a bitter ten-week strike, the longest in the orchestra's history. The musicians and management agreed to a four year contract, the major features of which include:

- ♪ an 8% salary increase over four years
- ♪ instituting the AFM-EPF as the orchestra pension, beginning in the fall of 1997
- ♪ a Community Outreach program, offering relief services in exchange for outreach services
- ♪ a 10-month trial period of revolving strings
- ♪ a formal review procedure for artistic leadership
- ♪ review committees for seating changes and tenure decisions.
- ♪ no reduction in orchestra size or length of season

The first salvo in the 1996 negotiations was fired on January 31, 1996, when six probationary symphony musicians were informed that they would not be granted tenure purely for financial, not musical, reasons. This move happened with no advance warning to the musicians, the community, or even to most of the board. The reason given for the dismissal of the six players was to save the \$400,000 annual cost of these musicians. Although the symphony had an accumulated deficit of about three million dollars, it had finished the previous season in the black and there had been no public announcement of financial distress.

The result of this action was immediate outrage from the orchestra, community, and many board members, especially among those members of the board who had worked to elevate the symphony from a community orchestra to a nationally recognized ensemble over the previous 25 years.

At this point the community stepped in. An anonymous donor offered two million dollars in deficit reduction money, with an additional \$2 million to be given if the orchestra could raise \$5 million in new money for its endowment by September 1996. Most of those matching funds were raised in just a few months, and the goal was reached in August, a month ahead of schedule. A group of concerned citizens organized themselves under the name of the Community Supporters of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (CSASO), and were very supportive of the musicians' goals. On May 15, 1996, the symphony board recanted and announced that the six players would indeed be granted tenure. But the damage to the atmosphere of the contract negotiations had been done.

The negotiations had already gotten off to a bad start on March 12, when management offered its first proposal to the orchestra. The symphony season would be cut by four weeks; probation would be extended to FIVE years; and management would no longer commit to maintaining an orchestra of 95 musicians. In addition, there would be no increase in weekly salary over the three years of the proposed contract which, in combination with the cut of four weeks, would amount to an 8% pay cut. When the management showed no movement after several weeks of talks, the musicians broke off negotiations, saying they would return to the table in Sep-

tember at the expiration of the agreement when, hopefully, there could be meaningful dialogue.

In the meantime, the musicians began what would be a long and effective public relations blitz. Leaflets were handed out at all concerts. Several letters were written to board members and financial supporters of the orchestra. The political committee made contact with the major politicians in the city. During this time the musicians continued to receive enormous support, and received worldwide exposure when they performed at the opening ceremonies of the Olympic games and in the concurrent Olympic Arts Festival.

In late August, negotiations resumed. The board had raised \$15 million dollars in donations over the course of the previous season and had erased the accumulated deficit. The management was no longer insisting on reducing the length of the season, and had reduced its tenure proposal to three years (still unacceptable), but would not commit to a minimum orchestra complement, and was still insisting on a three-year wage freeze. Instead of salary increases, the management proposed a wage reopener, or what they termed "revenue sharing." Under this plan any future pay raises would be indexed to ticket sales.

The musicians agreed to open the season playing and talking, but by September 6, when no further movement was forthcoming in the management proposal, the orchestra voted nearly unanimously to authorize the negotiating committee to call a strike at any time. The committee continued to try to resolve the dispute at the negotiating table but on September 21, when it became clear that no additional progress was being made, the negotiating committee voted to strike. The musicians agreed, however, to play the remaining concerts that weekend as a gesture to the audience. This proved to be a very popular decision with the public, and gave the musicians an opportunity to visit with audience members prior to those concerts to discuss issues and answer questions. On September 23 the actual walkout began, and picket signs went up at Symphony Hall for the first time in 13 years.

The musicians were well prepared for a strike. A "unity fund" of nearly \$70,000 had been assembled, strike committees had been active since the previous spring, and a working relationship with the press was already set up. In addition the Community Supporters had been in action for many months. In September over a hundred supporters and advocates attended the annual meeting of the Atlanta Symphony League, trying to get some answers and, if possible, change some of the makeup of the board. The chairman of the board made it very clear that there would be no open debate of symphony business, and ignored any motions for change.

Meanwhile the strike continued. Attempts were made to find an agreement before a major recording session, and then before the Symphony Ball, a major fund raiser, but to no avail. As the Christmas holiday season approached, a time when the orchestra normally plays more than 25 holiday concerts, it was clear that both sides were becoming increasingly nervous about the prospects for the entire season.

On November 26, the musicians offered to return to work immediately on the sole condition that both sides agree to submit to binding final offer arbitration, where a neutral arbitrator would

## The San Francisco Symphony Strike

### *Olive Branch On Tour Answered With Bitter Herbs At Home*

After tabling their labor concerns in order to complete their European tour, the San Francisco Symphony musicians voted to strike on December 6, 1996. Their contract had expired on November 23, while the orchestra was on tour. *The Sounding Board*, Vol. 1 No. 3, newsletter of the Musicians of the San Francisco Symphony, describes the reasons for the strike and lists these three pivotal issues:

♪ “The first major issue is a management demand that we give up our current health plan and change to an inferior one that offers lesser benefits and greater costs to the musicians.

♪ “Second, we are seeking to revise an overloaded schedule that we feel is the cause of an unusually high injury rate among our players. In the past ten years 28% of our musicians and 42%

*(Atlanta Strike: continued from page 6)*

examine the final proposals of both sides and determine which one was more reasonable. The board rejected final arbitration, but the offer prompted a flurry of behind-the-scenes activity. On December 2, both sides agreed to meet, without lawyers, until an agreement could be reached. Late that night the negotiating committee agreed to take an offer to the orchestra for consideration. The following day the offer was ratified by the musicians.

While the economic package is far from what the musicians consider reasonable, we had made strides in many other areas, and it was felt strongly that there would be little more significant movement by the management for a long time, putting the season, and perhaps even the orchestra, in jeopardy. It was clear to us that the objective of the board was to stand fast in all areas, whether or not there was economic justification for such a position. This regressive bargaining position was particularly ironic in view of the Long Range Plan, so recently adopted, which committed the board to maintaining the orchestra’s artistic level in the short term and in the long term seeking higher aspirations.

Remarkably, in the 10 weeks of the strike, there were almost no hard-luck stories among the musicians. This was due to the increase in AFM Strike Fund benefits and to the musicians’ personal financial preparation, which began many months before the strike actually occurred. Members of the orchestra would like to thank the orchestras of Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Paul, National, Minnesota, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Seattle, Boston, San Francisco, Savannah, and also members of the rock group REM, who all sent money and letters of support to the Atlanta musicians. In addition, musicians from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Montreal, and Savannah traveled to Atlanta to perform a brass gala in early December. We are also grateful to our counsel, Phil Sipser, for his advice and experience. The members of the Atlanta negotiating committee were Doug Sommer, Paul Murphy, Michael Moore, Carolyn Hancock, Carl Nitchie, Christopher Rex, Stephen Wilson, and Mark Yancich, but the strike was a tremendous cooperative effort of the entire orchestra.

*Carl Nitchie*

of our string players have suffered orthopedic injuries, with several careers jeopardized or ended as a result.

♪ “Third, we are seeking parity with other major American orchestras on economic issues such as pension, salary and seniority pay.

“We decided not to call a strike when our contract expired during our recent European tour in a good faith effort to work together in partnership with our management. When we returned to San Francisco and were faced with management’s unwillingness to address our issues, we felt we had no choice but to strike.

“The management claims that they want to nourish a ‘world class’ orchestra, but though they have money for exceptionally high administrative salaries and touring costs, they are unwilling to pay the benefits and salaries that would make their musicians comparable to others in this class. As former Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Riccardo Muti stated in his letter of support during their recent strike, ‘. . . the orchestra is its musicians.’ ”

The musicians rejected a new management proposal on January 28. At that time, both sides agreed that the issues of health care, salaries and pensions had been resolved, but that disagreements remained over scheduling of performances (including Sunday matinees), rehearsals and touring. Then, on February 10, 1997, after management slightly sweetened their January proposal, the musicians voted 54-41 to approve the terms of a new contract.

The new three-year contract includes pay raises of about 3.6 percent a year, from an average of \$1,430 per week in the first year to an average of \$1,590 per week in the third year. Pension benefits were increased to \$42,000. Symphony management won a concession on one of its main demands, changing the schedule to permit two additional Sunday concerts beginning in 1998-99.

“This is not the contract we had hoped for,” said Francis Jeffrey, musicians’ spokesperson. “The orchestra still feels that the issue of scheduling was not something we were able to address in this contract, but the orchestra felt it was time to go back to work. The current contract is similar to a proposal the orchestra rejected two weeks ago. The only changes are a new provision to aid early retirement and a small scale-back of the number of Sunday performances management wanted.”

Joshua Kosman, critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, made this observation concerning the cause of the strike and the prospects for healing the Symphony’s wounds. “What really caused the strike – and what will cause another one three years from now if it isn’t addressed immediately – is the atmosphere of distrust and lack of communication that has grown between the musicians and management, particularly Executive Director Peter Pastreich. . . . What the musicians really want would have been easier to provide than what they were ostensibly asking for. Pastreich made a lot of bold statements about the importance of safeguarding the fiscal future of the institution, but money wasn’t really the issue here. The musicians want to be included as partners in the enterprise, to collaborate rather than be dictated to; and a gesture in that direction would have cost the Symphony relatively little.”

## The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Alumni Association: Its Origin and Growth

by Phil Kauffmann

On the twenty-first of September 1991, as part of the centennial celebration of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, many retired and former members of the orchestra met in the ballroom of Orchestra Hall to rub shoulders with former colleagues and reminisce about their years in the CSO. It was a beautiful reception, overflowing with drink and wonderfully delicious food, and it celebrated the official establishment of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Alumni Association.

The occasion was the realization of a dream for retired CSO violist Isadore ( Izzy ) Zverow. Izzy had long envisioned an organization that would bring together, during the centennial season, not only all the retirees but every living former member of the CSO – all of those who no longer participated in the orchestra’s activities but who still took pride in having made their contribution to the Orchestra’s position as a world-class organization and who still thought of themselves as part of the CSO family. Izzy recruited a few retired members who had served with him on the CSO Members Committee and who had experience in organizational work to explore forming an association of retirees and former members.

Henry Fogel, the executive director of the orchestra, enthusiastically embraced the notion of an association of retirees as the living history of the orchestra, and he promised to aid the steering committee in any way he could. Fogel accorded the committee the facilities of the centennial office and the services of Evelyn Meine, then associate director of centennial activities and a long-time employee of the Orchestral Association.

A mailing was sent to potential members to ascertain their interest for such an organization, and the response was overwhelmingly favorable. The consensus was that an alumni association would be enthusiastically supported, that a reunion was in order, and that the organization should include spouses.

Unfortunately, Izzy Zverow became very ill early in the summer of 1991 and was unable to continue as pro tem chair of the steering committee, so I volunteered to fill in for Izzy while he was recuperating. The committee was also greatly aided by Sam Denov, a former CSO percussionist who had moved to California after retiring but who had recently returned to Chicago. Even while in California, Sam had offered to publish CSOAA newsletters on his computer. Not long after Sam returned, Izzy chose to relinquish his chairmanship due to reasons of health, and the steering committee chose Denov to succeed him.

The first reunion was planned for the 21st of September. There would be the ballroom buffet in the afternoon, the orchestra would give a concert that evening in Grant Park, to which the Orchestral Association had invited the retirees as special guests, and there would be a post-concert gathering back at Orchestra Hall, to which the CSOAA steering committee had invited the CSO musicians.

But plans were jeopardized by the breakdown of contract negotiations between CSO musicians and the Orchestral Association. The orchestra went on strike immediately following our

afternoon reception. Plans called for the orchestra to play the free public concert in the evening as a gesture of good will, but to then march from Grant Park to Orchestra Hall with picket signs. It would have been awkward, to say the least, for us to gather again in the site being picketed by our colleagues. Chicago Federation of Musicians president Charles Guse came to the rescue, arranging for the retirees, the members of the orchestra, and CSO music director Daniel Barenboim to be bussed to a post-concert (and post-picketing) reception in the union hall. It turned out to be a grand finale to a great day.

Since that time, we have increased our numbers by making current members of the CSO and qualifying substitutes eligible for membership. We now have 130 members, all of whom are entitled to the benefits of membership by paying the modest dues of \$15 and on presentation of their patron number card issued to them by the Orchestral Association.

Our **reunions** are now held every eighteen months, and we have had four of them so far. In 1995 we began presenting a deserving former CSO member with the Golden Note Award. The first went to Bill Fantozzi, who was approaching his 100th birthday at the time, and at the most recent gathering in October of 1996 the award went to Milton Preves, former CSO principal violist who was a CSO member for 50 years. (See photo next page.)

We stay in touch with the membership through our lively **newsletters**, published quarterly. This has proven invaluable in bringing news of the whereabouts and activities of our members to their former colleagues long out of touch with them. The news-

### The ICSOM Emeritus Program

Are you retiring from your orchestra soon and already dreading ICSOM withdrawal? Fear not! ICSOM remembers and honors our elders with the ICSOM Emeritus Program. Abe Torchinsky, retired tubist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, is director of the program, and has these encouraging words for those retired or about to be:

“Eligibility is quite simple. One has to be at least 60 years old, have spent a minimum of 10 years in any combination of ICSOM orchestras, and be retired and no longer playing in any ICSOM group. The Emeritus member may teach, play chamber music, and otherwise perform with any group that isn’t ICSOM related. The benefits are quite simple also. Emeritus members have their names listed under their orchestra in a section in the back of the ICSOM Directory reserved for the Emeritus members, and they receive the ICSOM Directory if they request it. They also receive *Senza Sordino*.”

If you are interested in becoming an Emeritus member, Abe would be glad to hear from you. His addresses and phone are on the back of this and every issue of *Senza Sordino*.



letter also provides a forum for members to provide their views on a range of topics.

The CSOAA is a social organization, and we have decided that taking militant advocacy positions is not the way to go. We do not want an adversarial relationship with the Orchestral Association. In fact, we now enjoy the warm embrace of a management which accepts us as the senior members of the CSO family. Management, and especially Henry Fogel, generously provided the help and support we needed to get us on our way and continues to do so. The Association provides the ballroom for our reunions at no charge and has helped to pay for the catered food and drink, and also provides **two tickets for CSO concerts at half price** to members (for their use only), either by subscription or single-ticket sales. All members receive **discounts** at the Symphony Store, adjacent to Orchestra Hall, and receive special prices during periodic special



Milton Preves (second from L), Principal Violist from 1939 to 1986, was the recipient of the Golden Note Award at the 4th Reunion of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Alumni Association. Presenting the award are four fellow alumni of the viola section (L to R): William Schoen, (1964-1996), Phillip Kauffmann (1927-1928 and 1964-1984), Isadore Zverow (1945-1988), and Donald Evans (1948-1988).

## The Lessons of the Past

### *A Veteran's Wisdom Illuminates San Francisco Strike*

Chris Bogios, trumpeter with the San Francisco Symphony for 34 years, has witnessed big changes in the organization during his long tenure. "This is an orchestra with tremendous pride in itself," he says with passion. "We are now one of the premier ensembles in the world, no question about it!" On the recent European tour Chris had an experience in a pub in Manchester that really confirmed his feelings. It was after the orchestra's concert, and Chris went to a nearby pub to unwind with the locals and have a few pints. Standing at the bar, he got into a conversation with the man next to him, who couldn't stop raving about the concert. "This type of audience enthusiasm doesn't come from the marketing department – only musicians playing their hearts out and creating excitement on stage can generate a response like that."

When Chris joined in 1961 as a young man of 25, the SFS was considered a middle-level orchestra. Musicians played part of the year in the Opera and the remainder in the Symphony, and many members were out of work three months of the year. His teacher, Charles Bubb, Jr., Principal Trumpeter under Music Director Pierre Monteux, retired a year after Chris came in and received no pension whatsoever from the Symphony.

sales of CSO CDs by the Association. (Tower Records, which has four stores in and around Chicago, also offers CSOAA members substantial discounts on all classical CDs and recordings.)

We have become a part of the Archives Office of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, of which Brenda Nelson-Strauss is the director and our liaison with The Orchestral Association. This is the natural home of the CSO Alumni Association, but with a difference: while the Archives Office preserves the orchestra's history of the past, the CSO Alumni Association is its living history.

Of course, we are nonetheless inextricably linked to the CSO Members Committee, which since its inception has been the most ardent and unrelenting advocate for retired orchestra members. Through the Members Committee's persistent efforts, for which we are grateful, the present retirees and their spouses have enjoyed significant gains in income which would otherwise not have been forthcoming. We would like to think that the Orchestral Association's recognition of the CSOAA, of our members' contributions to the renown of the orchestra, and of retirees as an important and enduring part of the CSO family has been helpful in the committee's negotiation of recent pension increases.

Now that we are an almost self-supporting member of the CSO family, we hope our experience in organizing the CSO Alumni Association, which has proven a boon for our retirees, will inspire other orchestras' retirees to emulate what we have achieved in Chicago. Our successful reunions and our communication with our membership help to preserve for the retirees and alumni their identity as an integral part of the great Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

*Phil Kauffman was a violist in the Chicago Symphony for 24 years and currently serves on the steering committee of the CSOAA. CSO ICSOM delegate Bill Buchman and CSO violinist Tom Hall assisted in the preparation of this article.*

Situations such as this made Chris determined to work for improvements, and he became active in the negotiating committees. His commitment to bettering the work life of Symphony musicians led to gradual improvements in all areas of symphonic life, from scheduling to touring to salaries. He is especially proud of having worked on the pension plan and pushed hard for the current system whereby a portion of revenue from our Wednesday morning open rehearsals goes to benefit all past retirees, with compensation depending on the size of their individual pensions. He knows from discussions with his former teacher, now in his 80's, how much this means to the older musicians.

Having served on all the negotiating committees but three in the past thirty-four years, Chris has a good perspective on the current struggle. He is distressed by the disparity in the appreciation the Symphony receives from the concert-going public and the lack of respect from management. "While the orchestra was financially in the black for twelve years, we still had to fight for every issue in wrenching negotiations, as if management wanted to keep us down at a second-tier level," he said. "San Francisco is really Major League now, in music, art and sports – so why are we treated like the old Pacific Coast Baseball League?"

*This story is excerpted from "CHRIS BOGIOS, His Trumpet Shall Sound," in the Sounding Board, Vol. 1, No. 3.*

*The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)*

**Statement of Revenues and Expenses**

*For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1995 to May 31, 1996*

	GENERAL FUND	EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	ICSOM MEMORIAL AWARDS	TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS
<b>Revenues</b>				
Dues 95-96	110,828.00			110,828.00
Dues 94-95	16,194.00			16,194.00
Interest Income	3,007.24	9,225.59	765.35	12,998.18
Book Royalties	2,643.87			2,643.87
Refunds & Reimbursements	2,557.00			2,557.00
Transfers from Other Funds			3,500.00	3,500.00
Total Revenues	135,230.11	9,225.59	4,265.35	148,721.05
<b>Expenses</b>				
Legal Expenses	31,485.00			31,485.00
ICSOM Conference Expenses	28,465.96			28,465.96
Media Negotiating Committee	10,348.49			10,348.49
Senza Sordino	9,036.14			9,036.14
Honoraria	8,400.00			8,400.00
Directories	7,244.72			7,244.72
Scholarship Award	2,500.00			2,500.00
Income Replacement	2,154.37			2,154.37
AFM Convention	7,008.18			7,008.18
OCSM, ROPA Conferences	1,553.41			1,553.41
Conductor Evaluations	910.00			910.00
Book Expenses	575.90			575.90
Telephone	6,680.60			6,680.60
Travel	4,937.95			4,937.95
Office Equipment	4,429.41			4,429.41
Postage	1,352.74			1,352.74
Duplication	1,294.51			1,294.51
Accounting Expenses	1,000.00			1,000.00
Email	898.30			898.30
Stationery & Supplies	704.23			704.23
Subscriptions	442.60			442.60
Bank Charges	60.00			60.00
Transfers to Other Funds	3,500.00		2,500.00	6,000.00
Total Expenses and Transfers	134,982.51	0.00	2,500.00	137,482.51
Excess of Revenues over Expenses	247.60	9,225.59	1,765.35	11,238.54
<b>Changes In Fund Balances</b>				
Fund Balances, beginning of year	95,359.83	165,293.95	10,533.18	271,186.96
Income	135,230.11	9,225.59	4,265.35	148,721.05
Less Expenses	(134,982.51)	0.00	(2,500.00)	(137,482.51)
Fund Balances, end of year	95,607.43	174,519.54	12,298.53	282,425.50

*The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)*

**Balance Sheet**

*For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1995 to May 31, 1996*

	GENERAL FUND	EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	ICSOM MEMORIAL AWARDS	TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash – checking	73,684.05			73,684.05
Investments		172,019.54	12,298.53	184,316.07
Prepaid Expenses	6,106.38			6,106.38
Dues Receivable	15,817.00			15,817.00
Loans Receivable		2,500.00		2,500.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>95,607.43</b>	<b>174,519.54</b>	<b>12,298.53</b>	<b>282,425.50</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</b>				
Total Liabilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance	95,607.43	174,519.54	12,298.53	282,425.50
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</b>	<b>95,607.43</b>	<b>174,519.54</b>	<b>12,298.53</b>	<b>282,425.50</b>

**Notes to the Financial Statements**

1. ICSOM is a conference of the American Federation of Musicians (AFL-CIO), and as such operates as a labor organization under section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. The primary activities of ICSOM, reflected in the General Fund, are providing legal and technical assistance to musicians and players' committees of member orchestras; exchanging information with orchestra musicians by means of the annual ICSOM Conference, the ICSOM Directory, the ICSOM newsletter (*Senza Sordino*), the ICSOM on-line services (*Orchestra-L*, *DOS Orchestra*, and the ICSOM Website), and other publications; representing ICSOM orchestras and addressing their concerns at the annual AFM Convention, at the other AFM player conferences, and at negotiations for national labor agreements affecting ICSOM member orchestras; and administering a nationwide Conductor Evaluation Program.

2. The ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund provides loans to member orchestras requesting financial aid during work stoppages or other emergencies, under conditions set forth in the ICSOM bylaws.

3. The ICSOM Memorial Awards Fund was established in honor of Ralph Mendelson, a founder of ICSOM. This fund makes scholarship awards annually to minority students.

4. "Book Royalties" are the royalties received by ICSOM from the sale of *The Musician's Survival Manual*, by Richard Norris, M.D., published by MMB Music, Inc. "Book Expenses" are royalty payments made by ICSOM to the author and costs of production of the book.

**ICSOM Web Site Tops the Charts**

The fabled ICSOM website, lovingly tended by Webmaestro Robert Levine, was awarded a Platinum rating by *NetGuide*, an on-line magazine, with this review:

"The content and commitment shown by ICSOM speaks well for its continued success in organizing orchestra and professional music groups throughout the United States. This comprehensive site helps professional musicians research their rights as contract or salaried workers. The organization clearly and efficiently outlines its history, goals, and membership list of orchestras. From here you can visit other professional music associations and unions. An index of articles from the print newsletter *Senza Sordino* is helpful for archival purposes, and the e-zine *DOS Orchestra* acts as an electronic *Variety* for the string, reed, and brass professional. Clear navigational tools make accessing the info a pleasure, although this is a business-only site with few graphics or musical diversions. Given the extremely competent and cohesive presentation, we can expect ICSOM's site will continue to impress."

## The Editors On Art and Civilization

The following is excerpted from "Editor's Cadenza," which appeared in *Una Voce*, newsletter of the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM), Vol. 4, No. 2.

In his book, *Our Oriental Heritage: The History of Civilization, Part I*, historian Will Durant proposes his definitions for civilization. He states that the four necessary elements which define a society as a civilized one are economic provision (food, shelter, clothing), political organization (government), moral traditions, and the pursuit of knowledge and the arts. A society lacking one or more remains primitive. If we cease pursuing knowledge and the arts for whatever reason, be it "these are hard times" or "we must balance the budget," we are in fact ensuring the collapse of our civilization just as surely as if we were to cease all economic activity, or all political activity. You cannot sacrifice one of civilization's cornerstones to the interests of the others any more than you could take stones out of the east wall of a foundation to repair the west wall. Yet this is what our leaders seem to be intent on.

It is more important than ever that artists not surrender to this climate of fear that has been constructed in the political arena over the past several years. There is no more potent stimulus to the human powers of imagination and healing than music, and there has never been a time when imagination and healing have been needed more.

Jim Ewen  
editor, *Una Voce*

The Senza Sordino editor adds:

Although Mr. Ewen's remarks primarily address the current anti-arts political climate in Canada, the concepts he presents have relevance beyond Canada and beyond the political arena. The attack on the arts comes from many quarters, from inside arts institutions as well as from outside, and can be passive as well as active. The "dumbing down" of the arts, the avoidance of risk and innovation in programming and operations, and the turtle-like retreat of arts organizations into a shell of safety, complacency, and stagnation are just as surely abandonment of the arts as are funding cuts, bankruptcies, apathy, and greed. Governments, foundations, and donors who insist on organizational retrenchment and budget-balancing in hopes of saving arts institutions are, in the process, killing the art.

Imagination, not fossilization, is the direction of hope for the arts. As Mr. Ewen suggests, let us remember the "human powers of imagination and healing" – the reason art exists, the reason art is a cornerstone of civilization, and the reason we have devoted our lives to it – and recognize that within the art itself, unfettered, unabridged, uncensored, is the power to overcome all the forces that would destroy it.

Marsha Schweitzer  
editor, *Senza Sordino*

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Baltimore Symphony Orchestra  
Boston Symphony Orchestra  
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra  
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra  
Cleveland Orchestra  
Columbus Symphony Orchestra  
Colorado Symphony Orchestra  
Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
Florida Orchestra  
Florida Philharmonic Orchestra  
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra  
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra  
Houston Symphony Orchestra  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
Kennedy Center Orchestra  
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Louisville Orchestra  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Minnesota Orchestra  
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New York City Opera Orchestra  
New York Philharmonic  
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## *Corrections to the ICSOM Directory 1996 – 1997*

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Fax: (212) 605-0909

### **Add to the end of the listing for the HONOLULU SYMPHONY:**

Womack, Anna	Viola	808-924-4075	2609 Ala Wai Blvd. #505	Honolulu	HI	96815
Wong, Ira	Percussion	808-247-7698	44-268 Mikiola Drive	Kaneohe	HI	96744
Wong, Sandra	Viola	808-456-7817	P.O. Box 11186	Honolulu	HI	96828
Wrenn, Greg	Violin	808-488-1398	98-1065D Komo Mai Drive	Aiea	HI	96701
Wu, Hung	Violin	808-951-0963	1541 Dominis Street #1001	Honolulu	HI	96822
Yamashiro, Iolani	Violin	808-839-2949	1848 Ala Mahamoe Street	Honolulu	HI	96819
Yasui, Byron	Bass	808-947-2134	1521 Alexander Street #1602	Honolulu	HI	96822
Yu, Zhao	Viola	808-949-3759	2030 Kakela Drive	Honolulu	HI	96822
Zou, Cong	Violin	808-537-6440	217 Prospect Street #PH103	Honolulu	HI	96813
Zou, Keiko Saito	Violin	808-537-6440	217 Prospect Street #PH103	Honolulu	HI	96813

### **The Robert Bloom Collection**

The late Robert Bloom (1908-1994), oboist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, NBC Symphony, and Bach Aria Group, left a legacy of style and musical interpretation equalled by few. Now, his wife, Sara Lambert Bloom, is making available a collection of Mr. Bloom's work. *The Robert Bloom Collection* is a three-part set of 40 original compositions, transcriptions, cadenzas, and performance editions of mostly Baroque works with Mr. Bloom's own ornamentation, articulations, cadenzas, and continuo parts. Prices for each of the three parts range from \$75 to \$250, and discounts of 20% are available on orders received before June 1, 1997. For more information, write to The Robert Bloom Collection, Cranberry Isles, Maine 04625, or to [cranisles@aol.com](mailto:cranisles@aol.com).