

# Senza Sordino

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## ICSOM Goes to Washington, D.C.

### *Bruce Ridge Testifies before the House Committee on Education and Labor*

*On March 26, 2009, in Washington, D.C., ICSOM Chairperson Bruce Ridge was honored to deliver testimony before the House Committee on Education and Labor at the Committee's Hearing on the Economic and Employment Impact of the Arts and Music Industry. The trip was arranged through AFM's Legislative Office with the help of Director of Government Relations Hal Ponder. Below is the text of Chairperson Ridge's testimony.*

Good morning, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon and members of the Committee. My name is Bruce Ridge. I am chairman of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, or ICSOM, which is a conference of the American Federation of Musicians. I'm also a double-bassist in the North Carolina Symphony. On behalf of ICSOM's thousands of members and AFM's tens of thousands of members—comprising over 230 affiliated locals across the country, including Local 367 in Vallejo and Local 424 in Richmond, in your district, Mr. Chairman—I thank you for your attention to this issue.

In 1932, my orchestra was founded by the WPA. That was also a time of economic crisis, but instead of cutting back, we invested in the arts.

Critics sometimes say that classical music is just for the elite. But as an orchestral musician, I know how much everyone loves to hear us play. The numbers bear this out: Opera attendance has increased 40% since 1990. Classical music accounts for 12% of sales on iTunes, and music schools across the country are seeing an all-time high in numbers of applicants.

Musicians don't do it for the money. We're ultimately the nation's biggest donors to the arts, and we're the ones who sacrifice to keep orchestras alive in hard times. We happily give to the arts, but we must still pay doctors' bills, make rent, and feed our families.

I've been fortunate in my career. I started playing at age 10, and I've worked steadily as an orchestral musician for 30 years. By age 15, I was a working professional in the Virginia Symphony. I would go from school to symphony, then play in late-night jazz clubs I was too young to legally get into otherwise. Back home by 3:00AM, I'd be sitting in school just a few hours later. Although I may have started a bit younger than others, my story is not atypical. Many classical musicians work several jobs, driving from town to town as members of a "Freeway Philharmonic." Some members work in as many as four different orchestras – each a different two-hour commute from home, and each with its own set of concerts, rehearsals, and community involvement.

In today's economic climate, the challenges for working musicians are growing ever more serious. Many orchestras face the prospect of reduced seasons, layoffs, lower wages, and higher health care premiums. This is a national problem. The musicians of the Cincinnati Symphony, one of the world's finest orchestras, recently accepted an 11% pay cut. The Baltimore Opera Company has filed for bankruptcy. The Santa Clarita Symphony, in your district Congressman McKeon, canceled its 2009 season. The musicians of the Honolulu Symphony are now seven weeks behind in paychecks. On a daily basis my phone rings with more news of yet another orchestra's financial crisis.

For musicians, the losses are immeasurable. Some must sell their instruments to make ends meet, while others face the loss of their careers altogether. Many of these musicians have children or spouses who depend on them and who also suffer from these cutbacks. How could I respond, when a woodwind musician asked me how she could afford to take her child to the doctor after her orchestra's proposed cutbacks?

Our losses are everyone's losses. If musicians can't afford to stay in the profession, the nation will lose its music.

Musicians are small-business people, patching together royalties, concert fees, and union benefits like session fees, pension, and health  
*(continued on page 8—see HOUSE COMMITTEE TESTIMONY)*

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## Chairperson's Report by Bruce Ridge



*I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens.*

—John F. Kennedy, October 26, 1963

### Advocacy and Activism: Now More Than Ever

On January 20, all of America celebrated some of the nation's greatest instrumentalists when Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Anthony McGill (Metropolitan Opera), and Gabriela Montero performed immediately prior to President Obama's oath of office. I was privileged to be standing backstage at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, watching the historic event with the musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra. Regardless of political ideology, all Americans could feel pride in celebrating the great tradition of the arts in this country, as represented by some of the greatest musicians of the century.

But less than 20 days after that inspirational moment, the music almost died in Congress.

There can be no doubt that America faces a recession the likes of which most of us have never seen in our lifetimes. As Washington pondered how best to construct a stimulus to our nation's economy, huge numbers like \$800 billion or \$900 billion were discussed as if we could possibly comprehend them. Now, as of the Senate's final action on the package, it is set at \$783 billion.

Of that huge number, I saw no appropriation attacked as vigorously as the \$50 million that was destined for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). In fact, an amendment proposed by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) was adopted. The Coburn amendment excluded use of stimulus dollars for "museums, art centers, and theaters." In proposing this egregious amendment, Senator Coburn somehow masterfully (or should I say artlessly) tied funding for the arts to "gambling establishments."

Through the efforts of artists across the country, over 85,000 letters were delivered to members of Congress urging them to restore funding for the arts to the stimulus package. Thousands of these letters came from symphonic musicians who responded to ICSOM's appeal to work together through our partnership with Americans for the Arts (AFTA). The advocacy and the activism worked. The Coburn amendment was repealed and the \$50 million for the NEA was restored.

As Congress seeks to reinvigorate our economy, I couldn't agree more that we must analyze the value of every dollar spent. And one of the best possible investments for our dollars is in the arts. According to AFTA, the \$50 million in the House version of the economic stimulus package could save well over 14,000 American jobs.

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If it is possible to accurately calculate the math on such huge figures, the \$50 million that can save these jobs is about 0.006% of the stimulus package. And yet, from media accounts, you would think that the arts are antithetical to the economic recovery, as opposed to a vital component.

The *National Review* wrote: "The National Endowment for the Arts is in line for \$50 million. The unemployed can fill their days attending abstract-film festivals and sitar concerts."

This statement of course astonishingly ignores the fact that 5.7 million jobs are provided by the arts. And really—sitar concerts was the best they could come up with?

Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA) said (from the *Congressional Quarterly*): "I just think putting people to work is more important than putting more art on the wall of some New York City gallery frequented by the elite art community. Call me a sucker for the working man."

Whether or not Rep. Kingston happens to be a sucker, I will suggest that he is terribly misinformed and is merely repeating the tired talking points provided by pundits from over two decades ago.

The press was quick to add nothing to the debate, aside from ill informed stereotypes.

*True to form, Congress has loaded the [bill] with hundreds of billions in wasteful spending. The bill includes \$650 million for digital TV coupons, \$140 million to study the atmosphere and \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts. None of these proposals would create jobs or boost our economy. They're just old-fashioned waste.*

—Op-ed in the *Indianapolis Star*

*The National Endowment for the Arts would get \$50 million for new exhibits to deem America racist and sexist.*

—Op-ed in the *Norwich Bulletin*

The arts in America are a tremendous investment, providing an almost unprecedented return. Every dollar that the government invests in the arts returns seven dollars to the community. The \$50 million dollars that Senator Coburn attempted to rip from the stimulus package has the potential to return \$350 million to nation's economy. What other elements of the package offer such potential for the value of the taxpayer's hard earned dollar?

Here is what the arts mean for the economy of our nation each year:

- \$104.2 billion in household income
- \$7.9 billion in local government tax revenues
- \$9.1 billion in state government tax revenues
- \$12.6 billion in federal income tax revenues

It is easy for Senator Coburn and the *National Review* to repeat unchallenged rhetoric from the 1980s about NEA funding of specific projects. But their constituents, and the entire nation, deserve better at this time of economic crisis.

Whether you support the entire stimulus package or not, wouldn't you like to see a return of 7 to 1 on your tax dollar? An investment in the arts is just that—an investment with tangible returns. The money proposed for the arts will mean jobs for our communities, and will be invigorating for the cities where our children learn, our citizens live, and our companies do business.

There have been several examples of late that testify to the value and effectiveness of the activism of musicians. A petition created by ICSOM musician Jaime Austria (New York City Opera) calling for the creation of a Secretary for the Arts has inspired over 240,000 signatures. And then there are the 85,000 letters to Congress. Out of this bleak economic moment in our country's history, a new era of activism can and must arise through the spirit of unity among ICSOM and our friends.

We must not be dissuaded by hard times. Instead we must be inspired to voice our beliefs even more clearly, and we must be driven to unite and advocate for our communities.

A few years ago, it seemed to me that the arts were losing the argument of economics. ICSOM sought out a path to increase awareness of the importance of the arts and our orchestras to the financial health of our country. Along the way, we have found a few allies, and won a few victories.

But as I watched Mr. Ma and Mr. Perlman at the inaugural performance, I was struck by the spiritual importance of the moment. It had been a very long time since I had seen classical instrumentalists given such a prestigious honor as to take center stage at the historic moment of a presidential inauguration. It now seems to me that we have an opening to explore a new series of opportunities for the arts in America, and in doing so we must not emphasize only the economic argument to the exclusion of the cultural value of our orchestras. I once quoted a long-lost newspaper article that eloquently reminded us that "[a] civilization is not judged by its ability to generate income."

Recently, in preparing for a guest teaching appearance at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, I reviewed my remarks to the Federation International des Musiciens in Berlin last year. Some of these words have appeared in these pages before, but at this time of difficulties, I feel compelled to repeat them.

Everywhere we look there is evidence of the power of symphonic music. It is seen and heard through historical events. It was experienced internationally when Leonard Bernstein conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony here in this great city at the fallen Berlin Wall. It is heard on one of my favorite vinyl records; an amazing live recording by the Boston Symphony of Mozart's *Requiem* at a memorial mass for President Kennedy in January of 1964. I felt it on the lawn at Duke University immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, where thousands of people held candles as they listened reverently to their own symphony orchestra, a scene repeated throughout the world by hundreds of orchestras in hundreds of locations. It is felt in the response of our audiences and seen throughout our

(continued on page 8—see CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT)

## In Troubled Times: The Case for the Arts

by JoAnn Falletta



Photo by Mark Dellas

*From the Virginian-Pilot, February 15, 2009*

I am a musician. I have known that simple fact since my seventh birthday, when I wrapped my arms around the little guitar that had been a gift from my father, when I breathed the dusky fragrance of wood and varnish, when I touched the grainy fingerboard that would become my personal road to enchantment. Despite challenges, I have never had one moment of regret about that calling, nor a second of doubt about the vital role that music plays in the world around us. As a conductor, I have witnessed thousands of audiences—literally millions of listeners—come to the concert hall and leave, two hours later, in a place they would never have been able to imagine when they arrived, frazzled and distracted, earlier that evening.

I feel a certain conflict of emotions as I write this essay—gratitude certainly, for being given this opportunity to talk about the importance of the art form, but also a profound sorrow that classical music somehow finds itself desperately in need of advocates. Why should that be especially so in troubled economic times? We feel betrayed perhaps by Wall Street greed, by ineffectual governance, by political leadership. But music has never betrayed us, never let us down. It constantly gives back to us, as a boundlessly beautiful repository of the past or a vibrant mirror of our current society. The need for music is not learned—it is “hard-wired” into our being. Even infants respond to it and understand it. As we grow, our exposure to music sharpens our brains, awakens a heightened sense of individual awareness, helps us develop an appreciation for beauty and value.

The ancient Greeks in their extraordinarily sophisticated society understood the tremendous power of music. Plato himself espoused careful planning of the number of hours young people should listen to music in certain keys—so powerful was the influence of each key that it would have strong effects on the long-term personality and character of the young listeners! In my many visits to schools, I have observed that the musicians in the orchestra, band, or chorus are most often the students on the dean’s list, on the student council, in clubs and after-school activities and are often involved in community service as well. A strange coincidence? I don’t think so—I am convinced that the making of music teaches them the skills—discipline, patience, respect and dedication—that enable them to succeed in all their endeavors.

We remain for all of our lives extremely sensitive to that power of music, whether or not we choose to (or even can) articulate that power. I have always been fond of Garrison Keillor’s words: “An orchestra concert is where people go to find their souls. Having worked so hard to lose them, people come and sit in the dark under the spell of music and are reminded of their humanity.” What happens? That room full of people—all with different issues on their minds—experiences a force that we can never fully explain. Listening, our sense of time changes, our focus sharpens, our problems fade, our priorities shift.

We all know that the “music business” has a strong positive effect on our economy. Facts and figures will bear out the statement that concerts bring many times their cost back to the community. But that is truly beside the point. Music has a profound effect on our psyche, our understanding of ourselves, our view of a world grown astonishingly small. In a global community where solutions will be found through creativity, ingenuity and imagination, music holds the key to nurturing the values that will help us find answers to seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Why do we need music as a nation, as citizens of the United States? Some Americans might claim that we are not an artistic people. I could not disagree more strongly. Americans invented film, jazz, modern dance, musical theater, country music, abstract impressionism. We are expressive, innovative and imaginative. Our art echoes our essential American-ness—our willingness to experiment and to take risks, our desire to share and borrow and change, our egalitarianism, our inclusiveness, our endless curiosity and humor. This American art echoes every culture in the world, and has spread to the furthest reaches of the globe. The arts are how we explain ourselves and come to know ourselves. They are woven into the very fabric of our complicated democracy and into the lives of our people. They are, in a very real way, the sum of our collective soul. American orchestras—and the Virginia Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic are shining examples of this—are at the center of the arts in our country, and the cornerstone of our cultural society. Orchestras preserve our heritage, foster diversity, encourage creativity, and stand as a shining paradigm for excellence.

What do we remember and value from great civilizations of the past? Certainly it is not their business plans, their economic challenges, their financial success; not their wars, their fleeting conquests, their eventual collapse. We remember the beautiful and telling legacy of their artistic life – the paintings, poetry, architecture, music, gleaming brightly centuries after their creation, still able to move and touch us. Through their art, we realize that these long-dead creatures were really not so very different from us, filling their small parcel of life with as much beauty as they could. What will our great-grandchildren inherit from us? What will they remember? Will the economic recession of the early 21st century color their world? Or will the next century—most probably more complex and more intense than ours—still look to the nobility in the arts as a touchstone for what is truly valuable?

In times of economic difficulty, the arts, rather than languishing as a discretionary luxury, becomes more vital to the human condition. Through the arts, we honor our past, celebrate our present and dream our future. The very best of who we are is inherent in the arts, and the arts are at the core of the continual reinvigoration of our human spirit.

*JoAnn Falletta has served as the music director of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra since 1991 and of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra since 1999. In 2008 she was appointed to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.*

## A Tribute to Ron Bauers

by Robert Levine, ICSOM Chairman Emeritus

The sexy end of our business is what happens on stage—maestri with great hair emerging from the wings to lead legendary orchestras in gripping performances of works representing the very pinnacle of human creativity before cheering crowds in historic and acoustically perfect halls. At least, that’s what our business looks like on a really good day.

But, like most human endeavors, what’s visible is not the whole picture. Our industry has spawned an entire ecosystem of support ventures, ranging from orchestra managements to music schools to labor unions. And all of those ventures spawn additional support systems of their own.

One of the most unique contributions to our business, and one that was seemingly far removed from the cheering crowds and great masterworks, was made by a musician and accountant named Ron Bauers. Ron died on January 12, 2009 at the age of 60. He left behind a remarkable record of achievement, a great many friends and admirers, and a gaping hole in our ecosystem.

Ron began his career in our business as a musician, although not an orchestral musician. He was a working guitarist who moved into union activism as a member of the executive board of the Omaha local of the AFM. He went back to school and earned an MBA from Creighton University in Omaha, which led to his second career as an academic and the country’s leading expert on orchestral finances.

Ron’s contributions to our field began in the early 1990s, when he did a financial analysis of the Omaha Symphony, at the request of the Local and the orchestra’s musicians, in order to assist them in negotiating a new contract. The analysis he did was so remarkable that he was soon engaged by other orchestras (including mine in 1993) and subsequently the AFM.

His work was distinguished from previous financial analyses done for AFM orchestras by three key factors: its quality, its pedigree, and the fact that it was intended for public consumption. Ron only worked from audited financial reports and the IRS Form 990 reports that orchestras were required to file and make publicly available. It was thus hard for orchestra managements to argue with his figures – they were, at the end of the day, figures that management had sworn were accurate.

If they tried to argue with his conclusions, they came up against another obstacle – Ron simply knew more about finances, accounting, and what their numbers meant than they did. And, because he worked from data that was publicly available and verifiable, and because he was not only an accountant but taught accounting at a major academic institution, his reports had great credibility with the press and the public.



But none of this would have been possible without Ron’s rigorous intellectual honesty. He was not shy about telling musicians who had commissioned his analyses that their institutions were in trouble if that’s what the numbers showed him. While often his analyses showed that management could do much more for musicians than they thought or intended, the main impact Ron made on some negotiations was in convincing the musicians that management had real reasons for concern and that the musicians needed to take those concerns seriously.

I vividly remember a meeting several years ago in Chicago where Ron did a presentation to a group of orchestra activists on orchestra finances. At one point he talked about how to think about endowments; in particular, how much money managements should draw from endowments if they were to be sustainable sources of funding. Ron’s approach was extremely conservative, which did not surprise anyone who knew Ron. And of course he was well aware

that musicians had proposed far more aggressive approaches to endowment draws in some negotiations. Nonetheless, his presentation was met with universal acclaim, as the musicians in the room were happy to draw the conclusion that managements were stupid to take any other approach than the one so cogently argued for by Ron. He was undoubtedly hoping that, when they went home and thought about the issue, they would realize that proposing unsustainable endowment draws was not in their long-term interests without him having to draw the conclusion for them.

But I have no doubt at all that Ron would have told them exactly what he thought of such proposals had anyone been impolitic enough to ask.

I had the pleasure of working extensively with Ron in my orchestra’s negotiations in 1993/94, as well as during my time as ICSOM chair. He not only did a wonderful analysis of our situation in Milwaukee, but talked at length to several local newspapers about that analysis, which resulted in some incredibly useful press for us. And he even came to Milwaukee, in the dead of a very cold winter, to present his findings at a “town hall” meeting and a negotiating session.

As time went on, he became known within the community of orchestra musicians as the person to go to for all things having to do with institutional finance. He educated an entire generation of activists about those issues with his many presentations at ICSOM and ROPA meetings, as well as with articles in union publications and on the Polyphonic site.

I wrote earlier that Ron’s work seemed far removed from the bright lights and the great performances. But, in many situations, it was his careful and indisputable analysis that was key to managements

*(continued on page 8—see Ron Bauers)*

## Rely on Your Body? A Survey of Performing Arts Medicine by Richard Levine

First, a disclaimer—what this article is not intended to be: This article is not a substitute for medical care or medical judgment. If you even suspect that you may have an injury, disease, or condition that could impact your career as a musician or your quality of life, I strongly urge you to seek out competent medical advice. I do hope, however, that this article will assist you in finding a specialist who understands the medical needs and peculiarities of musicians and that it will help inform you as to what that means. If your medical concerns are more about prevention, I hope this article might point you toward helpful information. But be forewarned that neither ICSOM nor I endorse any of the practitioners, methods, or advice mentioned here or advocated by any of the sources herein.

That out of the way, we can start by noting that there is much more help available to musicians looking for such information than ever before. The first entry I found in *Senza Sordino* archives on the topic was from August 1975. It was a reprint of a letter in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that cautioned doctors to be aware of cardiac stresses on performing musicians. The subspecialty of performing arts medicine was in its infancy back then. In fact, another letter from the *New England Journal of Medicine* reprinted in the April 1976 issue of *Senza Sordino* was from a doctor with an interest in the developing field, for which he suggested the name “musical medicine.” (The more widely used term “music medicine” eventually morphed into the more encompassing “performing arts medicine” in part to differentiate it from the field of music therapy, which uses music to heal.) He encouraged similarly inclined doctors to form networks so that traveling musicians might find appropriate care when on the road. The July 1982 issue of *Senza Sordino* offered a cover story about the then-new use of beta blockers by musicians.

The first Symposium on the Medical Problems of Musicians was held in Aspen, Colorado, in 1983. The second Symposium was held the next year and was reported on in the February 1984 issue of *Senza Sordino*, which had a lengthy cover story on the state of music medicine. Further coverage of music medicine can be found in the April 1985, December 1985, and February 1986 issues of *Senza Sordino*.

ICSOM’s focus on the study of professional orchestra musicians’ medical problems led to a medical questionnaire that was distributed to ICSOM musicians in May 1986. Martin Fishbein, Ph.D. and Susan E. Middlestadt, Ph.D. were chosen to analyze the data. Funding came from ICSOM, the AFM, the Major Orchestra Managers Conference, and the University of Illinois Research Board. The entire August 1987 issue of *Senza Sordino* was devoted to the resultant landmark medical study, which was published as “Medical Problems Among ICSOM Musicians: Overview of a National Survey.”

That study revealed much of interest. Fully 76% of ICSOM musicians reported at least one problem that had a severe effect on their performance. More than 25% reported using beta blockers. Perhaps the most important part of the study, though, was the conclusion that there was an urgent need for techniques to treat and prevent occupation-related medical problems and that information on these

problems should be disseminated to musicians and their physicians, teachers, and other concerned professionals.

In the intervening years, there has been much progress in meeting that need and disseminating such information. The first issue of *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* was published in March 1986, with Dr. Alice G. Brandfonbrener as its first editor ([sciand-med.com/mppa](http://sciand-med.com/mppa)). (That first issue, by the way, included an article by our own former *Senza Sordino* editor, Tom Hall.) Dr. Brandfonbrener, who among her many other credits was director of health services at the Aspen Music Festival, must be lauded as one of the pioneers in the field who helped establish performing arts medicine (including singers and dancers along with instrumentalists) as a recognized specialty. Later, in 1986, she became the founding president of the Performing Arts Medicine Association ([artsmed.org](http://artsmed.org)). In 1991, with Dr. Robert Thayer Sataloff and Dr. Richard J. Lederman, she co-authored *Textbook of Performing Arts Medicine*, the first medical textbook for the field. The second edition of their book, now titled *Performing Arts Medicine*, was published in 1998. Dr. Brandfonbrener also authored an article in the April 1987 issue of *Senza Sordino*.

Even beyond the issues of *Senza Sordino* already mentioned, performing arts medicine has received regular coverage in these pages. (You may find it interesting to peruse issues that contained those articles. They are all available and cataloged on our website at [icsom.org](http://icsom.org).) In 1993, ICSOM published its first book, *The Musician’s Survival Manual: A Guide to Preventing and Treating Injuries in Instrumentalists*, written by Richard Norris M.D. and edited by former *Senza Sordino* editor Deborah Torch. Performing arts medicine has also been a frequent issue at ICSOM Conferences.

One musician who entered the field early on was Minnesota Orchestra cellist Janet Horvath, who got involved after having her own problems with tendonitis. She established the Playing (less) Hurt™ Injury Prevention conference and lecture series, the first of which was held in 1984. Janet has been preeminent in focusing attention on the medical problems of performing musicians. She published the first edition of her book, *Playing (less) Hurt: An Injury Prevention Guide for Musicians*, in June 2002. It is one of the most comprehensive resources available, having chapters dealing with (among other topics) overuse, risk factors and stressors, danger signals, explanations of numerous injuries and conditions, preventative and restorative approaches, stretches, work hardening, hearing, instrument modifications, and what to do when you’re hurt. A newly revised 2009 edition of the book has just been released. It contains a 26-page resource list of carefully researched listings of doctors and therapists, videos, tapes, books and CDs, websites and organizations, products, props, splints, and adaptive equipment including ergonomic instruments, chairs, and equipment. Copies may be ordered through [playinglesshurt.com](http://playinglesshurt.com), where you can also find the Dr. Norris book (as well as a DVD he produced), helpful links, and “stretch cards” that include all 90 stretches featured in her book. Janet has been kind enough to allow us to reprint an excerpt from her book, which you will find on page 12.

Lucinda Lewis, principal horn of the New Jersey Symphony, is another musician who has contributed to the field. What started in 1993 as a desire to publish a small, informational pamphlet on embouchure injuries has turned into a massive, open-ended research project, two books, and a website. After documenting the histories of 4,603 players (worldwide) with embouchure-related playing problems, Lucinda says unequivocally that embouchure overuse is the leading cause of the protracted and painful performance injuries sustained by wind players.

According to Lucinda, “Overuse has the potential of inflicting significant detriment to a player’s embouchure that can linger for years, something few players realize until they become a victim. Unlike any other performance injury, embouchure overuse syndrome does not respond to rest, and there is no medical treatment for it or speedy way of reversing its disabling effects. Every musician has to learn to navigate a busy performance schedule and weeks of heavy orchestral repertoire, but it is especially critical for wind players to be mindful of symptoms such as facial fatigue and lip swelling. These are the early warning signs of embouchure overuse. As much as possible, these symptoms should be met with caution and a reduction in playing time and playing intensity. The good news is that even the most painful and disabled of embouchures can be restored to full and normal function.” Lucinda’s website, [embouchures.com](http://embouchures.com), holds a wealth of information, some of it geared toward brass players. Her two books, *Broken Embouchures* and *Embouchure Rehabilitation* are also available for purchase there.

Another source of information, [Polyphonic.org](http://Polyphonic.org), (Eastman School of Music’s Orchestra Musician Forum website), is a fairly new entry to the scene. It was launched in April 2006 and already has many articles about musicians’ health and links to health-related websites. In addition to contributions from Dr. Alice Brandfonbrener, Janet Horvath, and Lucinda Lewis, there are also articles by Milwaukee Symphony violinist Samantha George, Alexander Technique teacher Barbara Conable, Pittsburgh Symphony violist Penny Anderson Brill, and flutist Amy Likar. One of the nice things about [Polyphonic.org](http://Polyphonic.org) is that it is constantly being added to. Also, being a forum, it allows for discussion of issues through the posting of comments. The health-related articles can be found under the “Orchestra Life” article category.

If one is going to explore treatment alternatives, a good place to start is Dr. Brandfonbrener’s cautionary and informative article on [Polyphonic.org](http://Polyphonic.org). Although she acknowledges that reading never hurts anyone, she also points out many things to consider when one is faced with medical problems that impact one’s performance. These warnings might be especially important when considering advice from the many sources available on the Internet, including from physicians, physical and occupational therapists, chiropractors, holistic medicine practitioners, spiritual counselors, fitness trainers, musicians, and lay people. All one need do is use a search engine to find such sources, but determining whether the advice will help or hurt might be more problematic. One site of interest, though,

is that of SHAPE, a Canadian not-for-profit organization whose mandate includes providing health and safety information for the performing arts and film industries. Their website, at [shape.bc.ca](http://shape.bc.ca), includes many downloadable pamphlets and studies related to our industry.

In addition to the books already mentioned, there are a good number of interesting titles available through normal channels. A partial list includes: *The Athletic Musician: A Guide to Playing Without Pain* by Harrison Cristine; *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body: The Practical Application of Body Mapping & the Alexander Technique to Making Music* by Barbara Conable and Benjamin Conable; *Indirect Procedures: A Musician’s Guide to the Alexander Technique*, by Pedro de Alcantara; *The Musician’s Body: A Maintenance Manual for Peak Performance*, by Jaurme Rosset i Llobet and George Odam; and *The Percussionists’ Guide to Injury Treatment and Prevention* by Darin Workman.

It almost goes without saying that none of these books, or any other, will fit the bill for everyone. We all have different bodies and different frailties. We play different instruments, and they place different demands on our different bodies. Further, our approaches to our instruments, and to music itself, make one person’s goldmine another’s junkyard. Even so, there is one additional out-of-print title that, although it relates only tangentially to the topic at hand and has little application to musicians as a whole, I feel compelled to mention here (because of its subtitle): *The Orchestra Conductor’s Secret to Health & Long Life: Conducting and Other Easy Things to Do to Feel Better, Keep Fit, Lose Weight, Increase Energy, and Live Longer*; by Dale L. Anderson.

Over the years, we have seen the quantity and quality of medical services available to musicians improve steadily. While there were only a handful of medical clinics dedicated to treating performing artists back in the eighties, now they can be found in many major cities across the nation and worldwide. You can find physicians and other medical practitioners specializing in music medicine through resources already listed, including the referral service of the Performing Arts Medicine Association at [artsmed.org/referrals.html](http://artsmed.org/referrals.html). Another encouraging sign is the number of hospitals that now host centers for performing artists. In fact, the Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, operates the Methodist Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM) and touts itself as the official health care provider for the Houston Ballet, the Houston Grand Opera, and the Houston Symphony. It even issues a CPAM Artist Card to members of the professional performing arts community to help the hospital meet performers’ special needs.

For musicians suffering hand or finger problems, I should mention that during the time period we’ve discussed, hand therapy has become an established specialty for physical and occupational therapists. The American Society of Hand Therapists was founded in 1977. Out of that grew a certification process for hand therapists, and Certified Hand Therapists (CHTs) have been certified by the Hand

(continued on page 14—see PERFORMING ARTS MEDICINE)

## Ron Bauers

(continued from page 5)

and musicians being able to reach agreements that managements could afford but that would also provide musicians with wage increases enabling their orchestras to retain and attract the talent needed to make great performances.

Ron's financial analyses will never be mentioned in a review of a great concert. But his contribution to the quality of countless performances was just as real as that of the superstar soloists, world-famous conductors, and well-paid musicians.

*Robert Levine's tribute to Ronald J. Bauers is reprinted by permission, Orchestra Musicians' Forum, Polyphonic.org. Photo courtesy of Dan Cerveney, Secretary/Treasurer of Omaha Musicians' Association, Local 70-558.*

## House Committee Testimony

(continued from page 1)

care to come up with a decent living. On Broadway, musicians face replacement by recorded music substituted for live music. In Hollywood, outsourcing film scores to musicians abroad threatens the livelihood of American musicians.

Congress can make—and indeed already has made—a big difference in these musicians' lives. The American Jobs Creation Act helped our recording musicians by providing tax incentives for domestic film production. Pension reform legislation has also helped the AFM keep its pension plan available to musicians. Chairman Miller, we thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Several members of this Committee have co-sponsored H.R. 848, the Performance Rights Act, which gives recording artists a right to royalties when their performances are played over AM/FM radio. Recorded music makes money for radio, but radio doesn't pay performers a single cent. The Performance Rights Act would correct this inequity, and we ask you to consider supporting this important legislation.

Entertainment is America's second-largest export, and music is essential to nearly all of its forms, either standing alone or as part of theater, film, and television. We can count the dollars, but we can't count the value of music to the American spirit. We saw it when the New York Philharmonic traveled to North Korea on a mission of diplomacy and artistry. The nation and the world were electrified by those images. And we see it here at home when my WPA-founded North Carolina Symphony plays free concerts for tens of thousands of schoolchildren each year. I can't even go to the grocery store without people telling me how much it meant to them when the North Carolina Symphony played at their school. The value of these experiences cannot be measured, and must not be lost.

On behalf of musicians everywhere, I thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee.

## Chairperson's Report

(continued from page 3)

communities as we help attract businesses, educate our children, and spread the name of our great cities.

We must remember: this we did with our lives for a reason. While it is and has always been so in vogue for orchestral musicians to be cynical, it is not beyond us to continue to indulge in our dreams. The greatest musicians among us are those who are still inspired by the opportunity to inspire. Through uniting together and reaching out to our communities, we can and will ensure that the arts continue to thrive, and we will continue to enrich the lives of our audiences as we improve the livelihood of our colleagues, all while inspiring the next generation of musicians.

Let our community of musicians serve as an example to those places across the globe that are aching to hear a positive message.

It is a right of the people that they not be deprived of hope. As they hear our music, let them also hear our voices.

We are the advocates for our art form, we are the advocates for our communities, and we are the advocates for our children. Through our music, we offer a message of hope that the world is longing to hear.

Let us not falter in our mission. Let us not be discouraged, but instead let us be inspired to greater activism by the recent successes. As the economy faces the prospect of getting worse before it gets better, we all must be engaged in advocacy for our art form, for our communities, and for our friends. We must not allow hard times to impair our idealism.

I do not doubt that we will weather this crisis, because I have faith in the musicians of ICSOM, and I have been inspired by the unity we have demonstrated. Soon there will be even more opportunities for activism—within our communities, and within our union.

I know we all will respond.

*Senza Sordino* is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

## Orchestra Newslets

According to an **Oregon Symphony** newsletter, more than \$5.7 million worth of tickets were sold for the season through December. That's better than they did for the entire season last year. They also boast of a double-digit increase in attendance, with concerts at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall averaging more than 71% full, with several of those virtually sold out.

Members of the **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra** ratified a one-year contract on January 24. It provides for a wage freeze and higher health insurance copayments—the latter change unilaterally imposed by management before negotiations were concluded. According to committee chair Martin Anderson, the orchestra committee's biggest disappointment was the failure to secure a multiyear settlement, which management originally sought but withdrew on fears of diminished funding and ticket sales because of the current recessionary economy. Complications in the process included: a seven-month bargaining period; friction with the New Jersey local union; the economic downturn; and the creation by the NJSO board of a "Special Board Subcommittee" to formulate a plan for the orchestra's 2009–2010 season—to which they invited musician board members—while negotiations were still going on. The resulting board plan calls for significant cutbacks next season.

Battered by a \$3.8 million deficit in 2007–2008 and a \$26 million decline in endowment investment value as a result of the current worldwide economy, the board and the management of the **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra** sought concessions from its musicians. According to delegate Paul Frankenfeld, although musicians have endured three years of wage freezes in the past two contracts since 2002, they nonetheless agreed to wage reductions of 11% for the first two years of their new CBA in order to avoid operational insolvency from declining credit lines. The restoration of current levels and progress are included in the final years of the agreement. The agreement also includes provisions for semi-monthly paychecks as a means of equalizing the difficulties of salary reductions.

After more than a century of punctual payrolls to **Honolulu Symphony** musicians, the Honolulu Symphony Society managed only one timely musician payroll during the entire calendar year of 2008. This dubious record is the result of a long-term lack of board leadership that was further tested by concert hall availability issues last year and the recession this year. During a challenging 2007–2008 season, Honolulu Symphony musicians went up to 11 weeks late in pay before gradually being caught up a few weeks after their season ended in May. The Honolulu Symphony musicians have once again fallen behind in pay this 2008–2009 season, despite having accepted a wage freeze for the current season. This season, the crisis arrived even earlier and with greater severity, with even the very first payroll arriving late. Since then, paychecks have arrived sporadically. ICSOM delegate Steve Flanter reports that the musicians have not been current in pay during any of autumn or, so

far, any of this winter. As of the third week of February, musicians were owed seven weeks of pay. [Editor's Note: At print time, HSO musicians have fallen 11 weeks behind in pay.]

In order to keep the organization afloat, the Honolulu Symphony board decided last November that it would raise \$700,000 in additional funds before January 1, 2009. This sum would have made it possible to get the musicians paid up by the beginning of the calendar year. Unfortunately, the board members' response to their own call to action was lackluster. They raised only \$92,000 of the \$700,000 they had committed to, a shortfall that has meant further pain for the musicians.

Steve says that, just as they did last season, the HSO musicians have continued to perform throughout this crisis. No concerts have had to be cancelled, and the music is continuing for the people of Honolulu. "Once again," Flanter notes, "we are keeping the board's mission of service to the community alive, even as the board is failing to honor its commitment to us."

But the HSO musicians are rapidly reaching a point at which they might not be able to continue to perform without pay. Many musicians have accumulated a great deal of personal debt, and some have been forced to leave the state in search of work. The HSO board has given no timetable for future pay. The implications of the growing possibility of a shutdown, even a temporary one, are serious. Unlike for the mainland, where it's hard enough to recover from a shutdown, in Hawaii the lack of freelance options to augment income combined with high living expenses may prevent many from remaining in town without the orchestra. If the bulk of musicians leave, it might be extremely difficult for symphonic music in Hawaii to restart. Steve fears that, unless something changes dramatically very soon, the very survival of the Honolulu Symphony may be doubt.



Chairperson Bruce Ridge made a site visit to Phoenix in early April. Bruce (standing) spoke with Phoenix Symphony musicians during a full orchestra meeting at Marjerle's in downtown Phoenix.

## An ICSOM Site Visit to the Twin Cities by Norbert Nielubowski, Leslie Shank, and Paul Gunther

*Chairperson Bruce Ridge made a site visit (January 19–21) to the Twin Cities to meet with musicians from both the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. As usual with such visits, Bruce also met with others interested in the orchestras. Below are reports from the delegates of those orchestras as well as a short addendum by Minnesota librarian and ICSOM Governing Board member Paul Gunther.*

On Monday evening, musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra gathered informally at the home of our librarian, ICSOM Member at Large Paul Gunther, to meet Bruce and to discuss current conditions and concerns at the Orchestra. Bruce spent the next day visiting Minnesota Orchestra rehearsals and addressing the musicians at a full orchestra meeting.

The worsening economic conditions and their effect on the arts concern all of us greatly. In speaking about these issues Bruce gave us a report on how various orchestras have been weathering the storm. He spoke very eloquently of his belief that the current downturn was a matter of managing short term debt and shouldn't be looked at as opportunities for managements to rewrite our contracts. Bruce also made a pitch for our individual involvement in Americans for the Arts. With a wealth of facts and figures at his command he showed (as many of us had learned at the ICSOM Conference last summer) that, rather than being a luxury, the arts are an important part of the economic vitality of a community. It helped put some perspective on the doom and gloom we've been hearing and helped remind us of the importance of what we do.

While on the Minneapolis side of the Mississippi, Bruce also met with Executive Director Michael Henson. Bruce and Paul met also with the AFM Local 30-73 board of directors, and with President Brad Eggen and Secretary-Treasurer Tom Baskerville. The Minneapolis/Saint Paul local board and officers have long been strong supporters of both the Minnesota Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

—Norbert Nielubowski, Minnesota Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

As ICSOM delegate, every year I am inspired by the speeches given by the officers at the ICSOM Conference and am eager to return home and share that inspiration with my colleagues. It was a great luxury for me that Bruce Ridge was able to speak directly to my colleagues during his brief visit to the Twin Cities.

During his visit to the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra on January 21, he reminded us that Lynn Erickson had been a fabulous Conference coordinator when the ICSOM Conference was here two years ago, and that it had been one of his favorite Conferences of all time. As Norbert mentioned earlier, Bruce tries to spread the message that the arts are very important to our local economy, and he had ready all the figures about our local arts and their economic

impact on our community. He also encouraged us to question our management thoroughly regarding our internal financial situation, especially whenever we consider possible cuts to ensure the health of our organization.

That day Bruce also attended an SPCO rehearsal and, accompanied by our orchestra committee chair, Skip James, met with our new CEO, Sarah Lutman. That evening several of us gathered over some appetizers and beers with Bruce at Nye's Polonaise Room to give him a glimpse of our local color.

—Leslie Shank, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

Elsewhere in this publication Bruce describes most eloquently how affecting it was for him (and, I might add, all of us) to observe the Obama inauguration ceremony for a few moments in the Minnesota Orchestra musicians' lounge before speaking to those of us gathered there during our break between rehearsals. I'm glad Bruce was here and able to share that with us.

On behalf of the ICSOM Governing Board and delegates Leslie Shank and Norbert Nielubowski, I am most grateful to the SPCO musicians committee and their committee chair, Skip James, and to the Minnesota Orchestra Members Committee and MOMC Chair Dave Williamson, for extending their respective invitations to Bruce to visit the Twin Cities and our orchestras.

—Paul Gunther

### 2009 ICSOM Conference

August 19–22, 2009

Hosted by

**The Musicians of the Virginia Symphony**

and

**Norfolk Musicians' Association, Local 125, AFM**

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235 East Main Street  
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*All attendees must register with Secretary Laura Ross  
Conference packets will be mailed in Spring 2009*

## San Francisco Symphony Ratifies Four-Year Agreement by Cathy Payne, ICSOM Delegate and SFS Media Oversight Committee Chair

Late last spring, as the SFS negotiating committee was gearing up to meet with management, it seemed like it would be a straightforward negotiation. The orchestra's finances were in excellent shape, as confirmed by a Ron Bauers audit (one of the healthiest arts organizations in the country, he reported) and by our board president, John Goldman (at the December 2007 Annual Meeting—six months before negotiations were to begin in earnest). The SFS had ended its 2006–2007 fiscal year with a surplus of \$454,000 on an operating budget of \$58.3 million. SFS Executive Director Brent Assink anticipated healthy finances for the near future, telling the San Francisco Chronicle, "We don't see this as an aberration...we see this in our financial forecast for the next two or three years."

Media was being negotiated at the national level, with bargaining on a national Integrated Media Agreement (IMA) slated to begin in September. The SFS was signed on for those talks, so media would not be an issue. Pension might be a bit thorny (what with the 2006 Pension Protection Act), and management wanted to make some changes in auditions, but relatively speaking, it seemed like a new collective bargaining agreement would be negotiated without too much difficulty. The orchestra had great confidence in our attorney, Susan Martin, and the experienced members of the negotiating committee, chaired by violist David Gaudry.

The first formal bargaining meeting with management took place in September, just as the markets were beginning to take a nose-dive. On the day opening proposals were to be exchanged, John Kieser, general manager and director of electronic media for the SFS, informed the committee that the SFS would be pulling out of the upcoming IMA talks, and wanted to bargain media at the local level. Two weeks later, management's opening media proposal was revealed—a convergence agreement that would allow them to capture unlimited audio and audio-visual material of all orchestra services, including activity around the stage before and after services, for no compensation. For unlimited release of any of these materials, the management would pay our current radio fee of \$30 per week (\$1,560 per year) plus 50% revenue sharing.

For years, the negotiating committee and the media committee of the SFS have tried to improve our embarrassingly inadequate radio payment, which has been the same for about twenty years (\$30 per week for unlimited radio broadcasts). To our dismay, many of our colleagues around the country have seen this radio language in front of them at their local negotiations, presented in an effort to force concessions in radio. Despite spending the bulk of our energy on this issue at the table three years ago, the only improvement we were able to make was a 10% AFM-EPF payment on the \$30. So now, our management was proposing a total media buyout—for our pathetic radio payment plus revenue sharing! (Over the past five seasons, SFS musicians have been paid approximately \$5,000 per season for media, with total media wages last year close to \$9,000. Musician costs represent 9%–12% of SFS production costs for media.)

From the outset, the negotiating committee insisted that no media, aside from radio, could be bargained at the local level—the bargaining rights were with the AFM. Management disagreed, insisting that since the SFS had pulled out of convergence talks before they began, they could bargain media locally. Trish Polach, attorney for the AFM in the IMA negotiations, along with Susan Martin and the committee, told John Kieser that he needed to go back to the national table to bargain. When the management team complained that things weren't happening fast enough for the SFS at the national table, the AFM offered to work with the SFS in an effort to come to terms on a convergence agreement that could be a model for a large-scale institution going forward, and while the SFS would not agree that they did not have the right to bargain media locally, they agreed to negotiate directly with the Federation.

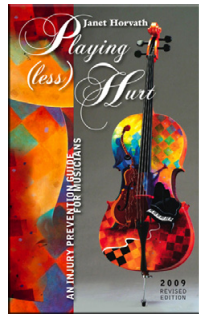
The deadline for our CBA was fast approaching (November 28) with no commitment from management to return to the national table for media and serious problems with the pension aspect of the negotiation. Management was proposing changing our current defined benefit pension of \$64,000 to a frozen accrual type of plan which would have had devastating consequences for the pensions of younger members of the orchestra. Many members would have seen their benefit cut to 30% or less of their current level, according to figures provided by two different actuarial firms—a result that was totally unacceptable to the negotiating committee. Susan and the committee urged the orchestra to play and talk, extending our November 28 deadline to January 17, 2009, two days before the scheduled SFS west coast tour.

There was not much progress on the media front during this time. Throughout the process, management argued that having cameras on stage 24/7 and doing media for almost no payment was "part and parcel of being a musician in the SFS today." They said the board would not accept a contract without a "groundbreaking" agreement for media. Despite hours of negotiations by phone with the AFM and a subcommittee of musicians from the SFS and ICSOM Media Committee, and a full day of negotiations with the AFM team in San Francisco on January 5, the SFS's offer for a convergence agreement went up only \$15 a week, to \$45 dollars for unlimited capture and exploitation of recorded material. It was clear that no resolution could be reached on media by the new deadline.

With the economic news worsening by the day, the committee engaged in intense bargaining two days before the new deadline. Thanks to Susan Martin's expertise in pension and the diligence of the committee, management finally relented and agreed that the defined benefit pension would remain in place. On the afternoon of the extended deadline, all issues for a four-year agreement seemed to be resolved except for electronic media. The committee offered a two-year agreement with no changes to media. This was rejected by management—who continued to insist that the board would not accept any contract that did not have a convergence agreement.

(continued on page 15—see SAN FRANCISCO SETTLEMENT)

## Playing (less) Hurt: an Excerpt from the Hearing Chapter by Janet Horvath



Title: *Playing (less) Hurt: An Injury Prevention Guide for Musicians, 2009 Revised Edition*

Author: Janet Horvath

Publication Date: January 1, 2009

ISBN-10/-13: 0971373558 / 978-0971373556

Website: [playinglesshurt.com](http://playinglesshurt.com)

Spiral-bound, 253 pages, \$29.95

We have retained the original numbering in this abridged excerpt from Chapter 15, titled "Hearing Is Our Business." It is a tiny sample of what can be found in Janet Horvath's book, *Playing (less) Hurt*. It is full of up-to-date information about how to protect yourself from potential dangers that could affect your ability to continue playing, as well as information about what to do if you fear you may have sustained an injury. Janet Horvath has been the associate principal cello of the Minnesota Orchestra since 1980.

### Prevention Strategies

There are many things we can do to protect our ears. For the sake of clarity, although all of the information is important, additional suggestions for young people, musicians who perform in a band, who perform "pops" concerts regularly, and who teach band in classrooms are in italics.

1. Practice more softly. It is important to practice and rehearse at softer dynamics. Save volume for the concert and, if possible, avoid practicing in small rooms with hard surfaces. The smaller the room you practice in, the greater the risk of hurting your ears when playing louder dynamics. We all sound fabulous in a tiled bathroom, but such spaces can be harmful to our hearing. Practice with earplugs. Violinists especially should use an earplug in their left ear. Use practice mutes or practice pads during home practice. Keep the piano lid down during practice and rehearsals. Take a ten-minute break every hour for both your body and your ears.

*Teachers/conductors, encourage students to keep it down, and avoid constant group or "tutti" rehearsal techniques. If you play in a band, keep your amp and your students' amps set at a low volume, especially if you teach in a small room. If you are a classroom teacher and the room has highly reflective surfaces, experiment with carpeting, drapes, and absorbent materials on the walls to absorb some of the sound. Be wary of a blackboard behind the teacher/conductor. These are highly reflective surfaces, which will reflect high-frequency sounds and increase the sound intensity in the room. Cover them with drapes, blankets, or carpet, which can be removed when the blackboard is needed. Make sure to carpet the area where the teacher/conductor stands, as this will also absorb reflections of sound. Likewise, for hard surfaces on the walls,*

*cover them with tapestries, 3-D art, or absorbent materials to reduce decibel level.*

2. Distance yourself and stay out of the line of fire. Whenever possible, increase the space between yourself and the noise. Onstage, this means away from the percussion, brass, piccolo, and any loudspeakers or monitors. Do not allow soprano, trumpet, or piccolo soloists to face the orchestra. When distancing is impossible, use hearing protection and/or barriers or shields.

*If you are in a band, make sure that the setup is back from the edge of the stage. The higher-pitched sounds of the band reflect off the lip of the stage, magnifying the higher pitches. If you are a bass guitar player chances are you stand near the drummer and must play louder than you'd like to hear yourself play. Try using "shaker" loudspeakers. These are small devices that enhance the low-pitched bass notes and are plugged into the main amplifiers. As a result, the overall sound level is reduced because the bass player can play less loudly. On-stage monitors add troublesome decibels to the overall sound levels. In-ear monitors are small devices that look like hearing aids, but are connected to cables and are able to be plugged into the amplification system, thereby reducing the overall decibel levels. They also allow the bass players and drummers to hear their music better, while giving some hearing protection.*

3. Use plexiglass shields. Many orchestras have some hearing protection language in their contracts, and many provide plexiglass acoustic shields. To achieve any benefit, the screen must be placed a few inches from one's head. If screens are placed too close to the brass or percussion, their own sounds tend to be reflected back to them, making it difficult for them to judge their volume and projection. Experiment in order to accommodate everyone. Shields are effective in reducing the impact or attack of loud sounds, but they are of limited value regarding the protection of your hearing, because they cannot reduce the sheer volume. Use hearing protection as well. There are many types of shields available today.

*During Pops programs or for jazz and rock bands, surround the drummer in a plexiglass box open towards the front. This will serve to lessen the impact of the high-hat cymbals and rim shots and will help to protect the other members of the group. The highest frequencies, those that are the most damaging, are reduced. Note that the low sounds like those from a bass drum would be virtually unaffected. It is important to make sure that the shield does not extend above the drummer's ears, as then his own sound is reflected back to him.*

4. Wear hearing protection. Always carry the small foam plugs or ER 20 over-the-counter reusable plugs in your case, pocket, purse, and locker. These are inexpensive and effective. They can cut down 20 dB when fully inserted. The downside is that the

occlusion effect is pronounced with these plugs (whereby you hear your own swallowing, your tonguing and your voice too much), and this can interfere with performing.

Be cautious about putting earplugs in and out frequently. You may cause ear infections by pushing bacteria into your ear. Although it may appear that the eardrum is red to your doctor, usually the infection is of the ear canal or it may seem to be "swimmer's ear." If your doctor asks, "Have you been swimming a lot lately?" your response should be, "No, but I do use earplugs frequently." Make sure to keep the plugs and your hands clean. Clean plugs after use (or discard). Check for any wax debris that may be lodged inside the plug.

Use earplugs with extreme caution if you have a cold or sinus infection. Germs may be spread by the internal pressure of loud, sustained playing in wind and brass players and can result in infection.

Etymotic Research ER-15 and ER-25 Musicians Earplugs™ are designed specifically for musicians to reduce noise levels by 15 or 25 dB, and since they are a deep-fitted earplug, there is less occlusion. These must be custom fitted by an audiologist.

In Minnesota we were able to negotiate a precedent-setting arrangement whereby the management has agreed to pay for a portion of the cost of the earplugs up to \$120. One can comfortably perform with these earplugs. Research indicates that the brain adjusts to hearing with earplugs. The more you wear them, the better you will hear with them, and the more you will save your hearing. Remember that cotton and Kleenex do nothing to protect your hearing.

If you are able, purchase both 15 and 25 filters, as these are interchangeable. Having both filters gives you the option of more protection when you need it.

Another excellent product is the Hocks Noise Braker®. It is an axiom of physics that we cannot create or destroy energy. We can only change it. Unbeknownst to the wearer, the Braker converts sonic energy into thermal energy. All you notice is that a dangerous sound cannot get through the filter. Developed in 2006, these tiny inserts, the size of a grain of rice, allow up to 80 dB of sound to enter your ear. They "kick in" when the sound is elevated, thus they are ideal for pieces of music with fluctuating sound levels. There are two versions available. The standard Braker is the less expensive option. They are mass produced ear tips with the Noise Braker filter inserted, but they may not totally fit your ear. The more expensive Custom Noise Brakers, which require a licensed audiologist to make an impression of your ear, are more successful in completely sealing off the ear, thereby not allowing any sound to enter the ear, except through the filter. These offer better

*(continued on page 14—see PLAYING (LESS) HURT EXCERPT)*

### 10 SUGGESTIONS FOR AMPLIFIED "POPS" CONCERTS

*from Playing (less) Hurt, Chapter 15*

1. Stand or sit beside speakers, not behind or in front of them. High frequency sounds embark in a direct line outward from the speakers.
2. Tilt or elevate loudspeakers to ear level if possible. Depending on the type of speaker, this can result in a "flatter" response, allowing the overall sound level onstage to be reduced.
3. Lobby for in-ear monitors. These devices allow the rock musicians to hear themselves better, while offering some hearing protection, and the overall sound levels can be lowered.
4. It is important to set up monitors and loudspeakers back from the edge of the stage so there is minimal reflection from the lip of the stage.
5. Use shaker loudspeakers. These small devices enhance the lower pitched bass notes. They are plugged directly into the main amps allowing the bass player to hear himself better over the sound of the drums and therefore play with less volume.
6. Use acoustic plexiglass shields. Enclose the drum set player in a Plexiglas box. This offers some protection from the high-hat cymbals and rim shots. Place a shield between the high-hat cymbals and the other players, ensuring that the baffle does not extend higher than the drummers' ears, otherwise the drummers may be subject to their own high frequency sounds.
7. Place the treble instrument players on risers.
8. Avoid rehearsing in small rooms with reflective surfaces and turning up the volume on speakers.
9. Have access to a soundlevel meter and monitor the decibel levels. Have some written contractual language limiting exposure to inordinately intense levels of sound.
10. Wear hearing protection!

## Playing (less) Hurt Excerpt

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protection. Like the ER earplug, they reduce the volume coming in while allowing you still to hear.

*Pop, rock band performers, and classroom teachers who play at volumes that may reach 120 dB must wear plugs that can attenuate to levels under 100 dB. Some audiologists will design individualized hearing conservation programs for musicians. Remember that the main source of damage is from the high-hat cymbal, and other high-frequency treble notes. The trumpets' sounds, for example, come out of the bell like laser beams. Move away from these as much as possible.*

5. Minimize your exposure. Our hearing is our life. Be aware that voluntarily or not, it is subject to constant abuse. Life in our society has become chronically noisy, and we all live with it. The ear is an entry to our nervous system. In adults, noise exposure can contribute to our feeling either elated or frustrated after a particularly loud program, affecting blood pressure and sleep patterns, and causing headaches, gastric complaints and irritability.

Theaters, rock concerts, ice shows, circus shows, bowling alleys and even clothing stores bombard us with loud music. Furthermore, chronic noise is stressful. According to Gary Evans, Ph.D., professor of human development and environmental analysis at Cornell University, studies show that noise levels affect concentration and motivation, and can contribute to increased anxiety and learning delays in children.

Be vigilant about your exposure, both on and off the job. Be vocal about your discomfort and insist on amplifiers being turned down or redirected, and insist on a shield and/or plugs. Away from the job, avoid loud music and be aware of your exposure to environmental noise. Wear ear protection when you operate your snow-blower, leaf-blower, lawn mower, chain saw or drill. Think moderation. If you go to, or perform in, a loud concert on Friday, don't mow your lawn until Sunday. Give yourself auditory rest periods of 16–18 hours whenever possible. Carry plugs in your car, travel bag, instrument case, locker, and taped onto your lawn mower.

Take breaks every hour. Go to a silent room. Be sensible about your exposure and minimize the volumes—at least when you practice.

*Guitar teachers and performers should alternate acoustic and electric guitar, and amplify less while rehearsing.*

8. Experiment with risers. Put the brass players in your ensemble on risers so that their sounds go over the heads of the orchestra.

*Similarly, for bands, if the treble instruments are on risers, the damaging higher frequency sounds will go over the heads of the other performers.*

10. Hum! Humming or grunting just prior to a loud sound such as a cymbal crash or rim shot—and sustaining the hum through the

loud sound—will give significant protection. This is due to a small muscle in the middle ear called the stapedial muscle, which, when contracted, partially blocks loud sounds from getting through to cause damage.

11. Turn down volumes on everything and avoid unnecessary exposure to loud noise.

14. Create concert programs carefully. Advocate for considering the noise, volumes, and numbers of performers as criteria to be considered when developing concert programs and rehearsal schedules.

16. Experiment with stage setup. Putting noisy instrumental sections at the sides or at the front of the ensemble, or spreading noisy sections out, will place fewer numbers of musicians in the “line of fire.” If need be, consider stage extensions. Share noise doses by moving people around so that one player or one stand does not always get the brunt of the noise. Put the brass in a single row. Research indicates that the front row of two rows of brass players suffer the worst exposures.

*Some of the above information was gathered from Hear the Music by Marshall Chasin and A Sound Ear II by Alison Wright Reid. Reid's entire study is available at [asoundear.playinglesshurt.com](http://asoundear.playinglesshurt.com).*

## Performing Arts Medicine

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Therapy Certification Commission since 1991. Hand therapy goes beyond the treatment of hands, though, as the practice includes the upper quarter of the human body. In addition to additional training, some CHTs have very specialized equipment that won't be found at other therapists' offices. Of course, not all CHTs are equally knowledgeable about musicians' injuries, but if you don't find one who has substantial experience with musicians' problems, perhaps you can find a therapist with at least a sensitivity to your needs and a willingness to help. My personal experience suggests that this, in and of itself, may be worth quite a bit.

While playing *Wozzeck*, I suffered a severe pain in the little finger of my left hand. I assumed I had somehow strained it and that, like the other minor injuries we all sustain, it would go away in due course. But it didn't—although, months later, it was decidedly better. I saw a highly regarded hand surgeon who was very sympathetic and who would have liked to help; but I was unable to tell him precisely where the pain was, and his examination of each of my finger joints revealed nothing. He did take an X-ray and thus relieved my fear that something terrible was responsible. He told me that I should return if it got worse and I could tell him where the pain was. Until then, there was nothing he could do.

## San Francisco Settlement

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While orchestra members were hammering picket signs backstage on that Saturday night during the concert (“THE SFS IS NOT A REALITY SHOW!”), an agreement was reached. Scale would increase by about 4% for each year of the agreement, pension would go up to \$75,000 in the final year of the contract, and media would remain the same for year one (\$1,560 for radio), with the amount of money available for media rising to \$4,000 by year four. Management agreed to back off of their convergence proposal in exchange for assurances that the musicians would work under the Live Recording Agreement (LRA—we had refused approval in the past because we had been doing the same live recording work under SRLA), and agree to some exploitation of the archives (we would not agree to downloads from the radio archive for no upfront payment, because our radio fee was so low). The orchestra agreed to go on tour, and to extend the contract deadline to February 10 to allow for specific media terms to be reached.

After the orchestra returned from tour, local media negotiations to decide what could be done under existing Federation agreements began. The committee was disappointed when management put the same type of convergence agreement on the table at the opening meeting, forcing the committee to continue to beat back against convergence after management had agreed to take it off the table. A final settlement was reached in the early morning of February 11 after months of grueling negotiations, with talks continuing all night long and into the next day. The new media language worked out in consultation with the SFS Media Oversight Committee (MOC, consisting of the LIOC and the LOC) states that SFS musicians will work under LRA for a payment of 8% of scale (waiving project approval), allows digital downloads for no upfront payment but a revenue sharing model similar to Chicago Symphony's, and expands the promotional language and uses of captured material. In exchange for these changes, Management agreed to increase our audio compensation to 3% of scale for 39 weeks, the standard payment among our peer orchestras, by the fourth year of the contract. The new MOC agreement also contains an A/V capture deal that allows management to capture a week of material for 9% of scale, which will be credited against future imprint credits and release payments according to the terms and conditions of the Symphony, Opera, & Ballet A/V agreement when the material is released.

A settlement such as this during these difficult economic times would not have been possible without the expertise and commitment of Susan Martin and the negotiating committee members (David Gaudry, Frances Jeffrey, Melissa Kleinbart, Linda Lukas, and Nanci Severance). On behalf of all of my colleagues in the SFS, I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks to each of them for their incredible perseverance and dedication. This group was truly a “dream team” and ICSOM musicians across the country are in their debt.

*The SFS negotiating committee would like to thank Debbie Newmark (Director of Symphonic Media, AFM), Trish Polach (Bredhoff and Kaiser, P.L.L.C.), Bill Foster and Peter Rofé (ICSOM Media Committee) for their assistance with electronic media issues.*

Months later, with the problem still affecting my playing, I went to my primary care physician to discuss it. He has always been very understanding of my needs as a musician, as he is a violinist himself. He immediately referred me to another hand surgeon. (We both understood that I didn't want surgery, but it seems that hand surgeons are supposed to know the most about hands.) That was a total disaster.

The second surgeon, without caring to listen to much of anything, told me that I had simply worn out my finger and that there was nothing that was ever going to make it better. He suspected arthritis—even after I told him that two other doctors had assured me otherwise—and he kept to his opinion even after he looked at an X-ray he ordered and could find no evidence of arthritis. When he told me that he would not recommend surgery, I explained, again, that I wasn't interested in surgery and asked him whether some sort of therapy might help. He flatly said no and told me there was nothing that could help. It was all I could do to shake the hand he offered me as I hurried past him on my way out.

I returned to my primary care physician, and we agreed that I would try occupational therapy. I was given a list of occupational therapists from which to choose. Not knowing any of them, I started phoning to find out if any had worked with musicians' hands before. That's when I learned about CHTs. I found one who spoke on the phone with me at great length. That in itself was the most encouragement I had found in a long time, as not only had she worked with musicians' hands before, but she understood and was sensitive to how even a slight pain at the wrong time can be disastrous to a musician. She definitely was willing to work with me in a positive way!

The therapy sessions were also encouraging, at least at first. They would start with a wax bath to warm up my hand, then continue with massage followed by strengthening and flexibility exercises that used a variety of equipment and techniques. After some initial improvement, I was disappointed that we failed to make more progress after what both my therapist and I agreed had been sufficient time. At my last scheduled appointment, my therapist, too, was disappointed as she looked at my finger. Then she noted that I had left my wedding ring on this time, whereas I had normally taken it off during the wax bath. She had always told me that she suspected some sort of nerve involvement, and this time she theorized that the ring might be compressing a nerve in my adjacent little finger. She thought that might be causing the problem.

It was certainly worth a try, and I left the ring off to see what would happen. Much to my wife Jean's chagrin, the wedding ring *was* the culprit, and I called my hand therapist's office a couple of days later to report the almost immediate success. I was particularly glad that, after Jean's disgruntlement at the prospect of my going ringless, she eventually showed a sense of humor over the situation. At least she laughed when I told her about the comment made by the other therapist in the room when we were discussing the wedding ring: “Divorce. It's the only cure!”



## Nominating Committee Input

In accordance with ICSOM bylaws, there will be elections at the 2009 ICSOM Conference for the positions of ICSOM President, Secretary, two Members at Large, and Delegate to the AFM Convention. Also in accordance with ICSOM bylaws, the Governing Board has appointed a Nominating Committee that may, at its discretion, nominate candidates for those positions. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Conference.

The Nominating Committee will consider all worthy candidates, including those incumbents intending to seek re-election. The duties of all ICSOM officers are spelled out in the ICSOM bylaws. The ICSOM bylaws are available online at [icsom.org](http://icsom.org), and a copy is included in the ICSOM delegate manual. Among the criteria applied by the Nominating Committee are candidates' personal abilities, experience and activity in ICSOM, compatibility with ICSOM policies and personnel, and willingness to serve. Balance of orchestra size and diversity on the Governing Board are also considerations.

As part of its procedure, the Nominating Committee is soliciting comments and opinions, favorable or otherwise, regarding the incumbent officers and the dispatch of their duties. Delegates and members of ICSOM orchestras may contact any member of the

committee. The committee also welcomes suggestions of other possible candidates for these positions.

All input to the nominating committee will be held in the strictest confidence. Committee members may be contacted by telephone or e-mail. The deadline for input is June 10.

Members of the nominating committee are:

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