

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 36, NO. 1

January 1998

Toward UNITY 1998:

DUES & DON'TS

"Federation Work Dues—An Intolerable Burden" cried the headline of the August 1980 *Senza Sordino*. The anguished voice was a response to a new Federation work dues of 0.5%. Yet with or without Federation work dues, most of the money that musicians pay to the AFM never leaves the local office. The success or failure of the AFM as a trade union can only be assessed by putting the locals under the same microscope as local officers so delight in using to dissect the faults of the national office.

While there is much that the AFM does badly or not at all, it does excel in at least one area—it has its hands deeper into its members' pockets than almost any other union in the United States. Members of ICSOM orchestras pay, on average, close to 3% of their income to their union in the form of dues (exclusive of strike fund dues and internal assessments), an average of approximately \$1,350 per year per ICSOM musician. Some members of ICSOM orchestras pay twice that amount. (The average American union member paid \$425 in union dues in 1995, according to a study by the Employment Policy Foundation.) The situation for musicians in OCSM orchestras is comparable in percentage terms, while things are much worse for members of ROPA orchestras, who pay, on average, over 4% of their earnings to the union as membership and work dues.

Although there are many different dues structures and levels in American unions, the commonest formula (one adopted by the United Auto Workers, the Teamsters, and the Communication Workers of America, among others) is a monthly payment of twice the members' hourly rate, the equivalent of 1.2% work dues. Unlike the AFM, membership dues in these unions includes membership in their strike funds.

Of course, these are large unions, composed mostly of workers who work full-time under collective bargaining agreements. What about other entertainment unions? The Screen Actors Guild (SAG) is probably the best-known of the entertainment unions that belong to the AFL-CIO. SAG has 90,000 members, many of whom do not work full-time as actors. It charges basic annual dues of \$85, and work dues of 1.5%, which only applies to amounts earned over \$5,000 per year. SAG's initiation fee of \$1,118 is quite high by the standards of most unions, but clearly SAG, an entertainment union comparable in size and membership demographics to the AFM, seems to need much less of its members' money to represent them and provide them service. But then, SAG has no locals; it has branch offices and local councils in cities with significant film work, but these entities are not autonomous and report to the national board of directors.

Interestingly, the national office of the AFM also charges 1.5% work dues on work in the same industry, electronic media. Unfortunately, every AFM local with significant electronic media activity tacks on *another* 1% to 2.5% dues to that figure. Yet the problems of dealing with electronic media work are very similar for the AFM and for SAG; even the employers are largely the same. Why does the AFM need so much more of its members' money?

Other entertainment unions include Actor's Equity, which charges annual dues of \$78 and work dues of 2% (with a \$3,000 annual cap), and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), another AFL-CIO union in the electronic media industry, which currently allows locals to set their own dues, although part of their current restructure process will institute a uniform national dues structure. Currently the major AFTRA locals appear to charge, on average, less than 2% work dues, with a typical annual cap under \$1,000. The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), which represents dancers and singers and deals with some of the same employers as does the AFM, charges \$78 per year and 2% work dues, with an annual cap of \$2,000.

The AFM, in addition to charging dues that are out of whack with the rest of the labor movement, engages in another unusual practice—charging different dues depending on the workplace. Playing an instrument is essentially the same work in a Broadway pit, a Bar Mitzvah, a Hollywood sound stage, or Middletown Symphony Hall, but most locals charge different work dues rates for each kind of work (the work dues on the Bar Mitzvah generally goes uncollected because such jobs generally go unreported).

Exercise: What would you pay in dues if you were a member of SAG? How much would you save over what you pay now? If you were in the UAW, and paid 1/20th of your weekly earnings per month, what would you pay? Would you pay a different rate for assembling trucks than you would assembling cars?

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Where does the money go?

Fundamentally, unions exist to do three things: organize workers, bargain for those workers, and administer the agreements reached in collective bargaining to benefit the workers. But just how successful are the locals of the AFM in doing these things?

While the AFL-CIO has set a goal for its member unions of spending 30% of their resources on organizing, only a few AFM locals have real organizing programs or even staff organizers, and few local officers have either training or background in organizing. As a result, few locals succeed in bringing in new members who can be helped by collective bargaining. Many locals have not even been able to negotiate agreements with employers who already employ union members, whether for local scale wages or for so-called “dark” dates. Many locals have contractors who serve on their boards, which is a disincentive for the locals to organize those employers’ workers.

Symphony musicians have always felt secure knowing that their managements could never replace them with scabs in a labor dispute. But there are increasing numbers of large orchestral institutions in the U.S. that are non-union, such as the Portland Symphony (ME), the Naples Philharmonic (FL), and the New World Symphony (FL) (annual budget: over \$7 million), and thus an increasing pool of trained and competent non-union symphony musicians exists.

Exercise: How much does your local spend annually on organizing? Does your local have a staff organizer? If not, why not? How many new collective bargaining agreements has your local signed with employers in the last five years?

Since the advent of ICSOM in the early 1960’s, the picture regarding negotiating symphony agreements is less gloomy. AFM locals are required by Section 5.34 of the AFM Bylaws to provide “competent representation in negotiations.” In most ICSOM orchestras, this has meant that the orchestra chooses, and the local pays, the negotiator, generally an attorney specializing in labor law. But the burden of preparing and conducting the negotiation remains mostly with the volunteer orchestra committee, to be done in their spare time, generally without remuneration.

Only recently has the AFM and its locals even begun to provide meaningful help in preparing for bargaining. The AFM still does not have a complete collection of current local collective bargaining agreements in the theater or symphonic fields, even though players’ conferences and orchestra committees have begged for a complete contract database for years. Nor do the AFM and its locals have a systematic program for analyzing the finances of the employers it bargains with, nor the state of the industries in which its members work, nor health and safety issues of interest to its members. Yet what could be more basic for a union than to have a complete file of the agreements that it has with employers? What could be more basic for a union than researching the employers or analyzing the industries in which its members work? And most unionists would find appalling the notion that a union could do without a major occupational safety effort, especially in a field so prone to career-threatening injuries as the music industry.

In some negotiations, local officers are very helpful in work-

ing with other unions, a local solidarity committee, or the central labor council, but all too often the orchestra committee is left to flounder around by itself in the local network of labor activists. And when it comes to developing community support through public relations, most orchestra committees are totally on their own. A handful of locals have paid for their orchestra’s efforts to publicize their cause, but most orchestras that have gone this route have had to raise the necessary resources to do so out of their own pockets. Yet when orchestra musicians spend wads of their own money to protect their jobs and their salaries, they are also protecting the local’s most dependable source of income—work dues from symphony musicians. Most other unions don’t regard public relations during negotiations as a frivolous expenditure of the money they get from their members.

Only a bare handful of locals have offered their members on-site help, provided by trained organizers, in internal orchestra organizing and sustaining a strike, even though strikes are only lost when the strikers begin to feel frightened, alone, and abandoned. And, of course, if an orchestra wants to belong to the AFM’s strike fund, additional dues are required—usually paid by the musicians, not the local.

Exercise: How much direct support (money and staff time) does your local provide for bargaining? For strike preparation? For PR? For internal organizing? Count both direct expenditures and officers’ time. Does your local have a strike fund, or pay your strike fund dues?

Contract administration is the last of the trilogy of basic union duties. Here again, most of the work is done by the volunteer orchestra committee; many local officers lack sufficient negotiating background to be able to help much in administering agreements. Few ICSOM orchestras have reported difficulty in getting arbitrations funded by their local, but then most ICSOM orchestras generate very few grievances that go all the way to arbitration—a testimony to the effectiveness of the volunteer orchestra committees in negotiating and administering their contracts.

Exercise: How many grievances in your orchestra have gone to arbitration in the past five years? How much did your local spend (staff time and legal costs) on those arbitrations? How much time did the orchestra committee spend?

So what does the local do with your dues money?

The two line items that lurk largest in most locals’ budgets are officer/staff compensation and payments to the national AFM. Whether or not the money that goes to the national is well-spent is the subject for another article; nor is it something that an individual local can control. But most of the money stays with the locals. And locals can control how much they spend on staff and officers and, equally importantly, what those staff and officers do. So, aside from the basic trilogy of union responsibilities, what *do* they do?

A great deal of staff and officer time typically is spent in dues collection and member retention (as distinct from organizing). Unlike most unions, where dues are entirely work-based and usually collected by the employer through a checkoff system, AFM locals have to bill most of their members for both annual dues and work dues. This is both costly and labor-intensive. Few engagements yield

enough work dues to make the cost of dues collection less than prohibitively expensive. And the fact that each local has its own system for tracking and billing work dues makes economies of scale impossible.

Exercise: How much does your union spend collecting your work dues (supplies, postage, office equipment, and staff time)? How much does your union spend collecting work dues on casual engagements? Calculate the ratio between income and expense for both symphonic and casual engagements work dues collection.

Another massive pile of paper for most locals are payroll forms for Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF) performances. The MPTF is, along with "local autonomy," one of the great sacred cows of the AFM. But, while worthwhile performances come from the MPTF program, many locals find it difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to administer.

Exercise: How much time do your local officers and office staff spend in running MPTF? Does the 2.5% work dues that your local retains from MPTF gigs pay for the program's administration? What does the AFM office in New York do with the 2.5% (\$275,000 in 1996) that it gets from MPTF jobs?

Other piles of paper that are pushed around the average local union office are membership applications from musicians rejoining in order to work a job, lists of suspended, expelled, and dead members for the newsletter, charges that leaders file against other leaders for underbidding them, and letters dunning members for working unreported dates that the local discovered by scanning the newspaper. Is this what a union should be doing with its money?

Muss es sein?

A union can't be run without money. But are the needs and problems of running a union for instrumental musicians so unusual that musicians must pay higher dues than virtually any other workers in America?

A hypothetical trade division, or non-geographic local, of symphony musicians, charging 1.5% work dues, would have revenue

of approximately \$4.2 million (based on work dues paid by OCSM, ROPA, and ICSOM orchestras only), or around \$38,000 per year per orchestra. This would seem more than adequate to meet the legitimate trade union needs of symphony musicians, including organizing, health and safety initiatives, and a strike fund available to all symphony musicians. Unfortunately, the idea of a trade division has become politically incorrect in the AFM, even though the IEB promised a continuing investigation of the concept in 1991.

But there are existing examples that also suggest that a work dues level of about 1.5% could support a musicians' union as well as it supports virtually every other union in the United States. The case of the Screen Actors' Guild suggests that a fairly small union consisting mostly of part-time workers can provide good service to its members with dues of under 2%. And there are locals of the AFM that run on dues in that range. Of locals with ICSOM-level orchestras in residence, there are several with dues of 1.5% or under—San Francisco, Milwaukee, Rochester, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Syracuse, Raleigh, and Edmonton. And then there's the case of Seattle.

Since the shock of the Seattle Symphony's departure from the AFM, the Seattle local has rebuilt itself to run on 1.5% work dues even without any revenue from the orchestra. And it has done some remarkable things with that money. Not only does the local have an organizing program (partly funded by the AFM's Organizing and Education Department) and a staff organizer, but the local achieved one of the greatest victories in recent AFM history with the Fifth Avenue Theater strike. And the local is aggressively targeting the non-union work that is done in its jurisdiction, while continuing to organize and bargain for the smaller orchestras in the area.

A musicians' union that works for its members without taxing them half to death is not just a pipe dream. The AFM should work for and belong to the working musicians. It is, after all, our money.

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Book Review:

Organizing Genius:

A Study in Creative Collaboration

by Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman
Hardcover, 239 pages, \$24.00
Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Synergy is a condition in which the collective whole is greater than the sum of the parts, or as Warren Bennis quotes, "None of us is as smart as all of us." When those separate parts are all people of special genius, organized by a special kind of leader, the sum of the parts can be explosive. The Manhattan Project, the group that developed and exploded the first atom bomb, was literally that. Great Groups, collections of brilliant minds that, working together, change the world, are the focus of this engaging book by Warren Bennis, Distinguished Professor of Business Administration at the University of Southern California, and Patricia Ward Biederman, staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Bennis and Biederman chose seven of America's Great Groups, from the areas of science, politics, education and the arts, to show the defining characteristics that most Great Groups share and describe the incredible potency of brilliant people brought together in an environment that allows their genius and creativity full expression. The seven examples of Great Groups are the Disney Feature Animation team; the groups at Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) and later at Apple Computer that designed and built the Macintosh computer; the 1992 Clinton election campaign team; the "Skunk Works" collaboration that produced the stealth bomber; the Manhattan Project; and Black Mountain College, a communal alternative education experience emphasizing the arts, where the line blurred between faculty and students, and between learning and the rest of life. From Black Mountain emerged creative artists and thinkers such as composer John Cage, artist Willem de Kooning, dancer Agnes de Mille, director Arthur Penn, poet Allen Ginsberg, and visionary Buckminster Fuller.

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(ORGANIZING GENIUS: continued from page 3)

“People in Great Groups seem to become better than themselves.” Yet so many situations in life seem to produce the opposite result, limiting the expression of talent, stifling creativity, and frustrating our efforts to reach our full potential. What conditions are necessary to remove obstacles and foster unbridled personal and collective achievement? By identifying and studying examples of remarkable collaborative success, the authors uncovered many common threads that run through virtually all Great Groups which, taken together, are predictive of a group’s success. Here are some of the elements in their elegant formula for Greatness:

Great people. Every member of a Great Group is exceptionally gifted—intelligent, creative, versatile, and sometimes volatile.

A Great leader. The leader of a Great Group is “an equal among Titans.” “Great Groups are inevitably forged by people unafraid of hiring people better than themselves” and who exert “a more flexible kind of leadership that has more to do with facilitating than with asserting control. Like cats, the talented can’t be herded.” Leaders of Great Groups “are not creators in the same sense that the others are. Rather, they are curators.” Often Great Groups have a dual administration, one visionary leader, and another to protect the group from the outside world, deflecting “not just the criticism, but even the attention of the bureaucrats and conventional thinkers elsewhere in the organization.”

At the Manhattan Project, scientist Edward Teller, who at times vehemently disagreed with group leader J. Robert Oppenheimer, nevertheless had only the highest praise for his leadership: “He was incredibly quick and perceptive in analyzing human as well as technical problems. . . . He knew how to organize, cajole, humor, soothe feelings—how to lead powerfully without seeming to do so. Disappointing him somehow carried with it a sense of wrongdoing.”

A Great Goal. A Great Group has only one motivation—the goal. Not money, not fame, not power. “This is not a job. This is a mission, carried out by people with fire in their eyes” (or as Henry Fogel, President of the Chicago Symphony, once described it, “a fire in the belly” for the orchestra). The metaphors that leaders use to describe their mission are commonly those of war and religion. As Steve Jobs of Apple Computer says, Great Groups “put a dent in the universe.”

An enemy. “Virtually every Great Group defines itself in terms of an enemy. . . . When there is no enemy, you have to make one up. Whether the enemy occurs in nature or is manufactured, it serves the same purpose. It raises the stakes of the competition, it helps your group rally and define itself (as everything the enemy is not), and it also frees you to be spurred by that time-honored motivator—self-righteous hatred.” The Manhattan Project had Hitler; Clinton had Bush; Apple had IBM; the Skunk Works had radar beams.

Freedom and autonomy. “The late Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead once observed, ‘You do not merely want to be considered just the best of the best. You want to be considered the only ones who do what you do.’ Such people need to be freed to do what only they can do.” Great Groups answer to nobody but themselves and their internal quest for perfection. A powerful symbol of a Great Group’s autonomy is the eschewing of a dress code. T-shirts and

jeans are the rule; the “suits” are outsiders who do not understand and perhaps threaten the mission. And of special meaning to those of us in the working world where white collars have blue linings:

“Every American worker knows that a dress code is a form of social control, an unpleasant reminder that the boss can not only tell you what to do, but he or she can also tell you what to wear, just as Mommy and Daddy used to. Talented, independent thinkers always prefer to dress themselves.”

Absolute devotion and focus. Great Groups have “wonderful tunnel vision,” focussing on the project so intently that everything else escapes notice. The work of genius needs the best tools and the latest technology, but everything peripheral to the project is superfluous. Dull, even tacky, surroundings are common. “Perhaps a bland or unattractive environment spurs creativity, functioning as an aesthetic blank slate that frees the mind to dream about what might be.” Members of Great Groups are famous for having no lives outside the project. “Who has time for real life when you are making history?”

Physical and spiritual isolation. Great Groups are not of this world. They exist apart from other people, influences, distractions, and reality. “Great Groups are not realistic places. They are exuberant, irrationally optimistic ones.” This cloistered, protected, unfettered, high-intensity environment makes possible the expression of unbridled creative power. There seems to develop a mental expansion of boundaries and a resulting sense of irrelevance and even intolerance toward the limited outside world. Life is never the same thereafter: “What happens in a Great Group is always in Technicolor. Life afterwards may seem as drab as a black-and-white movie.”

A playful, decidedly adolescent subculture. “Thought is play. Problem solving is the task we evolved for. . . . On those rare and happy occasions when you are part of a Great Group, you know the truth of Noel Coward’s observation that ‘work was more fun than fun.’ Although Great Groups experience their moments of near despair, they are more often raucous with laughter.”

Youth and inexperience. Too much real-world experience can be a liability in a Great Group. Great Groups require fools to rush in where angels fear to tread. “Members of Great Groups often recall after their projects are over that they accomplished something remarkable because they didn’t know they couldn’t. They acquire “the godlike confidence—the creative chutzpah—that charges great groups.”

A powerful group dynamic. “At PARC, Taylor’s strategy for letting creativity flourish was to ‘get really great people together and manage the social dynamic.’ ” The intensity, stress, and intellectual struggle of Great Groups can produce tension and disagreement, but members of Great Groups get along better than most other groups, despite their idiosyncracies, because they are respectful of each other’s talents and mindful of the dependency of each upon the contributions of the others. They “tend to function with a sense of *noblesse oblige*, with the mind-set that much is expected of those who have received extraordinary gifts.”

A short life. “Our suspicion is that such collaborations have a certain half-life, that, if only because of their intensity, they cannot be sustained indefinitely.”

The list of Great Group identifiers goes on and on, the authors providing examples and case studies to illustrate each one. Just as each member of a Great Group builds upon the contributions of the other members, so too, each factor contributing to the group's Greatness compounds with all the others to form a strong matrix for success. At the heart is a leader who can combine the right people with the right motivators in the right environment, and then catalyze the reaction. This book also offers some practical advice for those who employ creative genius:

"The failure to find the right niche for people—or to let them find their own perfect niches—is a major reason that so many workplaces are mediocre, even toxic, in spite of the presence of talent. Too many companies believe people are interchangeable. Truly gifted people never are."

"Decency in the workplace, especially one that depends for its success on the talent and devotion of its employees, isn't just the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. The talent is your treasure. You don't chew it up."

Organizing Genius is full of wonderfully documented research on Great Groups and contains valuable advice for all existing or budding collaborative teams. It is also beautifully, even poetically, written. No one can read this book without feeling an emotional response, either nostalgia for one's own Great Groups, or longing to find a place in one.

"Genius is rare, and the chance to exercise it in a dance with others is rarer still. Karl Wallenda, the legendary tight-rope walker, once said, 'Being on the tightrope is living; everything else is waiting.' Most of us wait. In Great Groups, talent comes alive."

A Commentary:
Orchestrating Genius

The parallels between orchestras and the Great Groups described in *Organizing Genius* are striking. Orchestras are potentially Great Groups, and musicians instinctively know it. Their careers revolve around that moment, always latent, when the music becomes greater than the sum of the musicians—that concert, or movement, or measure that captures the essence of the music with such purity that, somewhere in the universe, it is still ringing. Creative artists are the natural raw material for Great Groups. They harbor the latent Great Group among them, and the potentiality for it follows them around like a shadow.

The personnel selection process for the Palo Alto Research Center, where the Macintosh computer began, sounds like an orchestra audition:

"Candidates were not only interviewed; they also had to give a talk before the assembled staff and field probing, sometimes sharp questions and comments. It was a grueling experience, an ordeal, and thus a time-honored way of creating fraternity. Existing members saw a successful candidate 'as someone who was going to make it more fun for them.' Acceptance was a high honor, affirmation that

you were among the best and the brightest, and everyone was aware of it."

Like all leaders of Great Groups, great conductors do not themselves create; they facilitate, clear the way for great artists to do the creating. With a great conductor there is a blossoming of freedom, a sense that all impediments to expression have been removed, as Oppenheimer removed impediments for the scientists of the Manhattan Project, or as Walt Disney gave his animators the inspiration to let their creative imaginations run wild. The book quotes Maestro Carlo Maria Guilini: "I explained my views to the orchestra. I did not impose them. The right response, if forced, is not the same as the right response when it comes out of conviction."

The leadership and control of an orchestral Great Group is found both on the podium and in the office. If the Music Director is the artistic, visionary leader of the orchestral Great Group, then it follows that the Executive Director is the protective, facilitative one. This nurturing function of management may be manifested in its stance at the bargaining table and also in day-to-day operations. Consider the matter of dress code, for example. As public performers, some sort of uniform dress is necessary and accepted by musicians. But subtle individual variations in dress, and the management's degree of tolerance toward such personal expression, indicate how well each component of the team understands its role in creating the Great Group. The nonconformity of Dennis Rodman, basketball star of the Chicago Bulls, was cited in the book as an example of the audacious display of personality in a uniformed team player that captures and emits the creative energy of a Great Group, enhancing, not disrupting, team unity and spirit.

The youthful nature of Great Groups also resonates in orchestras. In our youth we are strong, confident, trusting in our capabilities. It is a time of life that is filled with power, zeal, idealistic expectations, and high ambition—"the creative chutzpah"—and our music-making reflects that. But there is also something profound to be gained in the arts from a dose of real life experience and a mature artistic vision. Most orchestras are a healthy mix of youthful exuberance and older, perhaps tamer, wisdom, and the orchestra benefits from the interaction of the two. This was also a character-

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The Five C's for Creating Trust:

COMPETENCE
 CONSTANCY
 CONGRUITY
 CANDOR
 CARING

Warren Bennis

Rhapsody In Bluegrass, Part III

Louisville Musicians Find the Keys to Change Without Striking

Third in a Continuing Series

You will remember from Acts I & II that the musicians of the Louisville Orchestra, after years of skillful strategic maneuvering and dogged persistence, signed a progressive new collective bargaining agreement and pulled their orchestra from the jaws of a board bent on downsizing. But little did the citizens of Louisville know that the musicians' battle was really two battles being waged on two fronts. In order to slay the dragons that would destroy their orchestra, they also had to slay another dragon, this one in their very midst. . . .

ACT III

(Louisville, Kentucky 1996)

Scene 1: THE SECOND FRONT

The concessions forced on the musicians of the Louisville Orchestra in April 1994 marked the opening of two battlefronts. One, of course, was the struggle with the orchestra's board and management to move them away from the tyranny of the twin dogmas of downsizing and "getting to yes," as described in Acts I and II of this series. Tragically, the other battle was with the American Federation of Musicians and its Louisville local.

The musicians first had to recover from the shock of being forced, by their own union, to vote on mid-contract concessionary demands of the Louisville Orchestra board and management. On March 31, 1994, members of the orchestra's board distributed to each musician's home a packet of letters urging them to accept the concessions. One of the letters in the packet distributed by the board was a letter from Local 11-637 President John Roy, who, with the backing of the national office of the AFM, told the musicians that they were required to vote on the package—an act that the orchestra musicians viewed as betrayal by their union, and that caused one observer to state that the AFM "had blood on its hands."

After having been run over by a coordinated effort of their management and their own local acting hand-in-glove, the orchestra musicians realized they needed expert help and began an intensive education in trade unionism under the tutelage of their legal counsel and mentor, Liza Hirsch Medina. Sadly, it soon became plain that many other members of the local did not share their new understanding of trade unionism and solidarity. Instead, some in the local promoted the view that the orchestra musicians were selfishly bankrupting the local by demanding expensive representation from out-of-town. Many of those who believed this also received little, if any, representation or benefit from the local, and viewed it as essentially a fraternal lodge, conveniently paid for by the work dues of the orchestra musicians.

At the same time, the local's financial condition had reached critical mass. The local was unable to stay current on its financial

obligations. The Louisville Orchestra musicians offered in early 1996 to raise their work dues by 0.5%, bringing their work dues up from 2.5% to the 3% charged on non-symphony work, if the additional money would go towards their negotiating expenses. The local refused their offer. Perhaps the fact that the musicians also called for an in-depth examination of the local's finances, a small increase in the annual dues, and an increase in the rate for other symphonic work in the local, played a role in the local's rejection of the orchestra musicians' offer of a work dues increase.

Following the rejection of their offer to fix the locals' financial problems, the Louisville Orchestra musicians implored the AFM to pay attention to what was happening in Louisville. Although the newly-elected president of the local, Robert "Rocky" Adcock, resisted outside intervention, AFM President Steve Young dispatched AFM staffers Jim Kitchings and Chris Durham in June 1996 to do an on-site inspection of the local's condition. Young ordered the local to make full financial disclosure and to cooperate fully with Kitchings and Durham. Ernie Gross, a member of the orchestra committee, submitted to Kitchings and Durham a detailed record of vast sums of work dues paid into the local by orchestra musicians of which the local had no record. Kitchings and Durham unearthed many other discrepancies as well, even though the local was far from cooperative in producing its records. (The local claimed that its books were at the auditor's and that the local's computer had broken.) But when the books were recovered, it was found that Adcock's figures and the auditor's didn't match.

Kitchings and Durham cut their visit short by two days because the local was unable to provide the financial information they needed. Neither their suggested budget nor their recommendations to reduce office staff and make other savings were enacted by the board or membership of Local 11-637. Instead, yet another report was compiled by the local which restored the rosy membership projections which Kitchings and Durham had revised downwards.

This continuing financial meltdown led some in the local to force a membership meeting by petition to try to disavow the contract that the local had with the orchestra's negotiator Liza Hirsch Medina. The resulting meeting on July 15 was chaotic and uncivil in the extreme, and revealed to the members of the orchestra the depths of hostility toward them that existed in the local. The meeting ended with no action taken.

The members of the orchestra, convinced that the local had neither the ability to manage its resources nor the desire to help them keep their jobs, petitioned the AFM to place the Louisville Orchestra in the Orchestra Services Program (OSP) and asked ICSOM for assistance. ICSOM Chair Brad Buckley, armed with mountains of documentation (including verbatim notes of the July 15 membership meeting), went to the AFM. Rather than placing the orchestra into OSP, however, the AFM thought it better to take the local under its direct control. President Steve Young and the IEB put

Local 11-637 in trusteeship on August 5, 1996 and appointed George Sartick as trustee.

Scene 2: THE KING IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE KING

George Sartick, the new trustee, was a retired AFM International Representative and author of the most successful trusteeship in recent AFM history, that of Local 8 (Milwaukee) during the Milwaukee Symphony's difficult negotiations in 1993-94. Based on his success in Milwaukee, the AFM, ICSOM, and the Louisville Orchestra musicians had high hopes that Sartick would be able to bridge the divisions within Local 11-637 and deliver the services the orchestra musicians needed and had paid for.

But from the beginning of the trusteeship, when AFM President Mark Tully Massagli addressed the local membership at the trusteeship hearing August 21, 1996, the responsibilities of the local and the AFM under Article 5, Section 34 of the AFM Bylaws, i.e., to provide service to the orchestra in the jurisdiction, were neither affirmed nor explained to the membership. Instead, responsibility for the legal expenses of the orchestra musicians was consistently painted as something foisted on the local by the musicians of the orchestra. Questions from the floor about the local's responsibilities under AFM Bylaws were dodged or simply ignored. Many of the orchestra musicians felt that Sartick and Massagli had not been straightforward in dealing with their concerns, which only deepened the chasm that existed between the members of the orchestra and the rest of the local.

Sartick quickly made two decisions that profoundly alienated the members of the orchestra. He chose to retain former local president Rocky Adcock on staff, and at the same salary he had received as president, even though it was Adcock's shortcomings as president that led to the very trusteeship that he now worked for. And he placed the previous local president, John Roy, on the interim board of the local, even though Roy's role in the coordinated campaign to force the orchestra musicians to accept concessions in 1994 was well-known and well-documented. Sartick felt compelled to retain these holdovers from the past administration, for reasons which he was not entirely at liberty to disclose to the musicians, but the price he and the union paid for these decisions was the musicians' continuing and growing distrust.

Although the entire thrust of the trusteeship was to fix the financial situation of the local, the trustee fell farther and farther behind in the local's payments to the orchestra musicians' negotiator. The situation became so bad that the AFM, itself severely strapped for cash, loaned the local sufficient money to pay off its accrued debt to her. The new trustee created further mistrust among the orchestra musicians by initially excluding them from the interim committees he set up to solve the problems of the local. Only after vehement complaint did he add a few orchestra musicians to these committees, none of which were chaired by orchestra members.

The ultimate revelation of the unhealthy climate of this local came when the membership, at a meeting of the local on January 13, 1997, voted down an amendment to a resolution raising the orchestra's work dues that literally did no more than affirm that Local 11-637 was bound by Section 5.34 of the AFM's Bylaws.

Sartick, who was running the meeting, had initially tried to prevent the amendment from being introduced by a member of the orchestra, not even allowing the text of the amendment to be read. By doing this he had hoped to head off an ugly confrontation between orchestra and non-orchestra musicians at the meeting, but the attempt failed to stifle the confrontation and further outraged the orchestra.

It was clear after the depressing January membership meeting that dramatic action would be required to change the relationship between Local 11-637 and the Louisville Orchestra musicians. Having reached a tentative agreement with their orchestra management on February 6, 1997, the Louisville Orchestra musicians were able to turn their full attention to the struggle with their union. Because negotiations with management would begin again in little over a year, the Louisville Orchestra musicians felt considerable urgency in ensuring that their needs for expert help with negotiations and public relations would be met by their union.

It quickly became clear to the members of the Louisville Orchestra that the AFM would still not agree to place the orchestra in OSP, even though the Louisville mess was precisely the kind of situation that OSP was designed for, and even though the membership of Local 11-637 had made clear its unwillingness to meet the orchestra's needs (and, incidentally, abide by AFM Bylaws). Nor did the AFM seem willing to instruct its trustee, who was an AFM employee, to do what was necessary to allay the fears of the musicians that they would again be facing a hostile management without the wholehearted backing of their union.

Scene 3: READING THE TEA LEAVES IN THE HARBOR

In a letter to AFM President Steve Young on March 26, 1997, the orchestra committee wrote, "In the absence of an agreement between your trustee and the Louisville Orchestra Musicians' Association [LOMA] to guarantee that our representational needs will be adequately met into the foreseeable future, 62 of 67 current members, to date, have withdrawn their dues checkoff authorization." With their letter the committee enclosed a check for the per capita payment due the AFM on behalf of the orchestra members and stated the orchestra's intention to send Strike Fund payments and all further local dues and assessments directly to the AFM. These payments were characterized by the Louisville Orchestra committee as acts of good faith by "strong trade unionists and loyal members of the American Federation of Musicians."

The letter went on to state "in the absence of major changes and unbreakable commitments by the Louisville Federation of Musicians to honor its obligations under AFM Bylaws and show true support of its members who are struggling for survival, we cannot continue to fund a local that has so consistently shown itself unwilling and incompetent to represent us or to manage the money that we sent it." The orchestra musicians also informed the AFM of their intention to divert the work dues from their Louisville Orchestra salaries to a LOMA escrow account to be used to underwrite the upcoming negotiations, "in hopes of an eventual resolution of this situation." Although these actions were referred to by some at the

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 7)

AFM as a “dues strike” (even though the musicians had simply re-directed the money to the AFM, rather than paying it to the local), others described it as “the Louisville Tea Party.”

AFM Secretary-Treasurer Stephen R. Sprague returned the payments made to the AFM by the Louisville Orchestra musicians, stating that there was no mechanism in the AFM bylaws that allows the Federation to accept payments from individual members, and the orchestra committee put the funds back in escrow.

So there was stalemate—the orchestra musicians refused to send any more money to the local, although they were perfectly willing to send the same money to the AFM. But the AFM would not accept the money, even though the local had clearly stated its intent to violate its basic trade union responsibilities under AFM Bylaws. This stalemate precipitated intense dialogue over the next several weeks between the Louisville Orchestra Musicians’ representatives and the AFM. This communication was greatly expedited by ICSOM Chair Robert Levine, without whom the outcome could not have been achieved.

The ICSOM Governing Board, on April 30, 1997, wrote to President Young, urging him to place the Louisville Orchestra into OSP upon the orchestra’s request. The Governing Board went on to state that “The musicians of the Louisville Orchestra have been loyal members of the AFM for as long as the orchestra has been in existence, and clearly desire to remain so. They deserve far better treatment from their local and the AFM than they have received over the past several years. ICSOM is committed to helping them get the support they deserve and have paid for, and is committed to keeping them in the ICSOM family of orchestras. We urge you to find a solution that will keep them in the AFM family of musicians as well.”

On June 24, 1997, President Steve Young placed the Louisville Orchestra into the Orchestra Services Program. The agreement signed by the AFM and the orchestra committee has specific provisions to insure the support and stability required by their “troubled orchestra” status which the Louisville Orchestra musicians had unsuccessfully sought as rank-and-file members of Local 11-637. These provisions include the payment of a reasonable sum to legal counsel of the musicians’ choice and the payment of up to \$5,000 per calendar year for Louisville Orchestra musicians’ public relations, if so requested by the musicians. The dues that had been withheld from Local 11-637 and escrowed by the Louisville Orchestra musicians were paid to the AFM.

On November 5, 1997, Chris Durham, of the AFM Symphonic Services Division staff, was appointed new trustee of Local 11-637.

Scene 4: CODA

The problems faced by the Louisville Orchestra musicians in getting basic services from their fractured local reflect, in microcosm, the problems of all the working musicians of the AFM in getting their needs met by a union that is as much a collection of small fraternal organizations as it is a trade union. It was nothing short of grotesque that the Louisville Orchestra musicians had to

fight this battle at the same time as they were fighting to save their jobs. It was also unnecessary; had the AFM put the orchestra into OSP when the orchestra first requested it, the musicians could have put all of their energy into dealing with their management, rather than constantly looking over their shoulders and wondering how and when their brothers and sisters in Local 11-637 were going to pull the rug out from under them.

Through this struggle was born a new dimension of solidarity within the Louisville Orchestra musicians. They learned the importance that activism plays in securing the future both of American orchestras and of the union that represents the workers in those orchestras. They have also learned that, at the end of the day, they did have the power to get what they needed from their union. All it took was the willingness and courage to use it.

EPILOGUE

It would be hard to find a saga of any orchestra anywhere, anytime, that better demonstrates all the different kinds of problems with management and union that an orchestra might face, than this one. The Louisville Orchestra musicians heroically demonstrated how to solve those problems, and, as each offensive was launched against them, how the true spirit of unionism—standing together, speaking and acting together as one body for the common good—works to slay even the fiercest dragons.

The Louisville Orchestra musicians realize that they could not have survived the siege of the Louisville Orchestra board and their local without the many forms of support that poured into Louisville. From over \$30,000 in financial support from many ICSOM orchestras, to countless hours of advice and action on their behalf from ICSOM, the AFM, counsel, and other unions, they learned the need, meaning and power of solidarity. Draconian “getting to yes” concessions gave way to saying another kind of “yes”—“yes” to taking a proactive stand in their local, “yes” to building broad coalitions with the rest of the labor movement, and “yes” to the complex collaboration that resulted in the Fogel Report. Today, the Louisville Orchestra, its musicians, and their union have a much better chance for survival and health than ever before.

But this was a very costly victory. For many participants on all sides, self-esteem, friendships, careers, trust, health and hope were casualties of these bitter and long-fought wars. The real tragedy of Louisville is that, although much good came from both the wars that the musicians fought, neither was inevitable nor necessary. The orchestra survived without downsizing, and the union proved, in the end, that it could indeed serve its members in the Louisville Orchestra in the ways they needed. But the musicians, their orchestra, their union, and their community would have been much better served if their employer and their union had done the right thing from the very beginning, rather than at the very end.



The authorship of the “Rhapsody In Bluegrass” series belongs to many people. The editor wishes to especially thank the Louisville Orchestra musicians and their advisors, as well as representatives of the AFM and Local 11-637, for their contributions to the researching, writing and editing of this story.

RHAPSODY IN BLUEGRASS
COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

UNION

LOUISVILLE ORCHESTRA

FEB 5, 1996: Local 11-637 board rejects Louisville Orchestra Musicians Committee (LOMC) proposal to raise LO Musicians' work dues by ½% with conditions for representation

JUN 12, 1996: Kitchings/Durham report re: Local 11-637 (Local 11-637 refuses to adopt AFM recommendations)

JUN 28, 1996: AFM denies LO entrance into Orchestra Services Program (OSP)

AUG 5, 1996: George Sartick trusteeship begins

AUG 21, 1996: Local 11-637 trusteeship hearing

JAN 13, 1997: Local 11-637 votes to raise work dues on negotiated contracts from 2 ½ to 3 % *without* LOMC's conditions for representation

MAR 26, 1997: LO Musicians inform AFM of voluntary checkoff withdrawal, and send per capita, local union dues, assessment, and payment for negotiator to AFM (using ICSOM ERF loan funds)

MAR 29, 1997: AFM returns above payments to LO Musicians, negotiator paid in full

APR 23, 1997: LO Musicians pay per capita to Local 11-637
LO Musicians pay Strike Fund to AFM
LO Musicians pay ICSOM dues to ICSOM

MAY 14, 1997: LO Musicians hold their work dues in escrow until OSP agreement is reached with AFM

JUN 24, 1997: LO Musicians enter OSP

JUL 10, 1997: LO Musicians repay ICSOM ERF loan

JUL 11, 1997: LO Musicians send work dues to AFM

NOV 5, 1997: Chris Durham assumes trusteeship of Local 11-637

JUN 2-3, 1996: Louisville Orchestra (LO) contract negotiations open

JUL 1, 1996: Gregg Gustafson becomes Exec. Dir. of LO

SEP 28, 1996: LO contract talks stall

OCT 26, 1996: Stan Curtis joins LO Board of Directors (BOD)

DEC 2, 1996: Commitment by BOD to 70 full-time musicians

DEC 21, 1996: LOMC/Gustafson talks stall

FEB 4-5, 1997: Negotiations resume with Fogel/Medina involvement

FEB 6, 1997: Tentative contract agreement reached

MAR 6, 1997: LO Musicians ratify agreement

MAR 21, 1997: LOMC/BOD sign 14-month agreement

JUL 1, 1997: Stan Curtis elected LO BOD President

AUG 26, 1997: Max Bragado-Darman resigns as Music Director of the LO, effective June 1, 1998

NOV 10, 1997: Three one-year conductor appointments:
Uriel Segal, Principal Conductor
Bob Bernhardt, Pops
Robert Franza, Education

JAN 1, 1998: LO Musicians' attorney sends letter to LO BOD opening negotiations for a new contract

(ORGANIZING GENIUS: continued from page 5)

istic of the Manhattan Project and Black Mountain College, where the older, more mature participants mentored, and were admired by, the youthful members of the group in a collegial, non-hierarchical camaraderie.

“Being part of a group of superb people has a profound impact on every member. Everyone in such a group becomes engaged in the best kind of competition—a desire to perform as well as or better than one’s colleagues, to warrant the esteem of people for whom one has the highest respect. People in Great Groups are always stretching because of the giants around them. For members of such groups, the real competition is with themselves, an ongoing test of just how good they are and how completely they can use their gifts.”

Musicians in Great Orchestras can hear the ring of truth in this. Working within the isolation of our Great Group, we don’t just play *with* each other; we play *for* each other, in a way we do not play for the conductor, or the critic, or the audience. Great orchestral art is a game that only the members of a Great Group can play.

That mysterious distance from us, the necessity of remaining on the outside looking in, is the price our audiences must pay, it seems, if they want to experience the fruits of a Great Group’s labor. The public can receive and benefit from the finished product of Greatness, and may observe its creation from a distance, but they may not participate. The Great pursuit cannot be made interactive; providing opportunities for mass participation destroys the essential character of the experience and bursts the bubble of Greatness. Watered-down, one-size-fits-all, lowest-common-denominator Greatness is not to be had. Like watching animals at the zoo through bars and glass windows, people may look at Great Groups, but not touch, lest they destroy the precious, fragile thing simply by trying to know it better.

Keeping audiences feeling involved and supportive, yet still acknowledging this necessary separation, presents a formidable challenge to an orchestra’s marketing and development departments. But the allure of Great Groups teaches us that audiences are attracted by uniqueness and specialness. The arts will be successfully sold to both audience and funders to the degree that they are perceived to be out-of-the-ordinary, something rare, precious, and highly desirable, worth greater attention and reverence than everyday things. It is no accident that the most successful orchestras financially are the ones that are the most successful artistically, that sell the orchestra’s Greatness first, then its utility.

Yet we argue that the arts are a necessity, not a luxury, and that a steady diet of art is vital for a healthy human life. Art, we say, should become an everyday thing. Although this seems like a contradiction, a denial of the specialness of art, it is also true, and is one of the many paradoxes of Greatness. The synergy of the Great Group produces a synthesis of yin and yang, reaching beyond the boundaries of a single discipline and revealing an aspect of universal truth. That is why great truths are so full of paradox, and are equally true from all perspectives. They contain both sides of the coin.

These paradoxes have led to enormous confusion about the arts. We mistake involvement in art for appreciation of art. We accuse artists of being “elitist,” when in fact they are only “isolationist,” as they must be, in pursuit of Greatness. And, in keeping with Great Group motivation, they often consent to work for poverty wages because their single-minded devotion to their art is more important to them than eating—a psychological condition often exploited by the very employers who should be protecting their talented Great Groups from harm. We confuse art with the uses to which it might be put—education, entertainment, therapy, economic development—forgetting that art actually exists for, and receives its power from, none of these albeit useful purposes.

There are plenty of problems in the arts that cry out for Great Groups to solve them. As daunting as the challenges are, however, there is no more fertile ground from which to harvest a Great Group than the arts—home to some of the most creative, intelligent, diligent, optimistic, exuberant people on earth. Symphony boards, in collaboration with their managers and musicians, can also be Great Groups, and especially nowadays, must be, if orchestras are to survive and flourish.

The Great Group’s need for an enemy gives me pause, however. When employers engage in overt union-busting activity—breach of contract, unilateral implementation of salary cuts or arbitrary firings—they are not just provoking their employees into confrontation and strike, but may also be providing just the kind of diabolical enemy needed to inspire their employees to reluctant Greatness in defending themselves. The corollary to this is equally sobering. When we bury the hatchet, become “one big happy family,” when we stifle or sublimate our anger, are we denying to ourselves the passionate motivation that drives us toward extraordinary achievement? In losing our enemy, our focus, are we precluding the very Greatness we need to solve our thorniest problems?

Rather than submerging our anger, let’s redirect it. Adversaries-turned-allies, if they aspire to Greatness, must stop seeing each other as the enemy (that is, stop giving each other *cause* to see the other as the enemy) and find a common enemy outside their collaboration to galvanize them. The shared collective mission—not money or power or partisan desires—must motivate every member of the team, and the level of dedication from each member must be equal and absolute.

Orchestra economics and labor relations are not where the focus of an orchestral organization’s attention should be. Downsizing and union-busting are not worthy goals for a Great Group. An expansive artistic vision, not a narrow financial one, is necessary to excite our imaginations and lift us to the higher plane of artistic creativity and intellectual integration where Great Groups are found. Certainly there are nobler goals to be pursued and plenty of enemies to be engaged on that higher plane, should we all choose to direct our considerable skills and energy there.

*Review and Commentary by Marsha Schweitzer
Editor, Senza Sordino*



The vision and sacrifice of many now-retired ICSOM orchestra musicians made possible the vocational opportunities that today's working orchestra musicians now enjoy. Our friendship, respect, and gratitude for our retired colleagues' contributions to art and job demand their continuing membership in the ICSOM family. To that end, the ICSOM Emeritus Program was founded, serving musicians who are retired from ICSOM orchestras but are still interested in maintaining contact with the orchestra world through *Senza Sordino* and the ICSOM Directory. Abe Torchinsky, retired tubist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, led the way in creating the Emeritus Program and continues to direct it.

Over the last several months, a survey of ICSOM's Emeritus members was done by the ICSOM Governing Board to find out which benefits of Emeritus membership were most utilized by the Emeriti and assess the value of the program. The Emeriti have voiced their appreciation for the program loud and clear. Here is a sampling of what they had to say:

- *Senza Sordino* has galvanized our profession. Thank you. – Ben Armato (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, ret.)
- I am particularly interested in Part III of the Louisville Orchestra saga. I am now a member of the Louisville Orchestra Audience Association (after 25 years as a player) and hope to help as a "watchdog" participant for the upcoming negotiations. – Sally Brink (Louisville Orchestra, ret.)
- Knowing who is where in the ICSOM Directory helps me feel I'm keeping in touch. – Esther Gilbert (New Jersey Symphony, ret.)
- I am very grateful to the ICSOM Emeritus Program. It helps me stay current with developments in orchestras from the musicians' point of view. – Charles Gottschalk (Florida Symphony, ret.)
- Thanks for keeping me informed. As a "lifer" I have enjoyed keeping abreast of things relating to this interesting and fabulous business. Lorton Lives! – Charles Lorton (Los Angeles Philharmonic, ret.)
- When one is retired, receiving *Senza Sordino* helps a lot to keep in touch and still feel a small part of the musical world, which, at one time, was practically one's entire focus. – Josephine McAndrew (Houston Symphony, ret.)
- Having been a member of the Chicago Symphony and for many years the Met Opera Orchestra, and formerly a delegate to an ICSOM conference, I retain a great interest in all related news. I appreciate being included in a subscription to *Senza Sordino* and read it with pleasure. – Clare Van Norman (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, ret.)

First, my deep appreciation and best wishes to Abe Torchinsky for sending *Senza Sordino* to me and the other retirees. I retired from the St. Louis Symphony many years ago and just celebrated my 85th birthday, but I am still vitally interested in my profession, my union, and the activities of ICSOM.

The news that the AFM is in deep trouble is disturbing. The labor movement is now on a dramatic upswing and needs strong Internationals in every field, including ours. The unity among the four players' conferences is a good beginning.

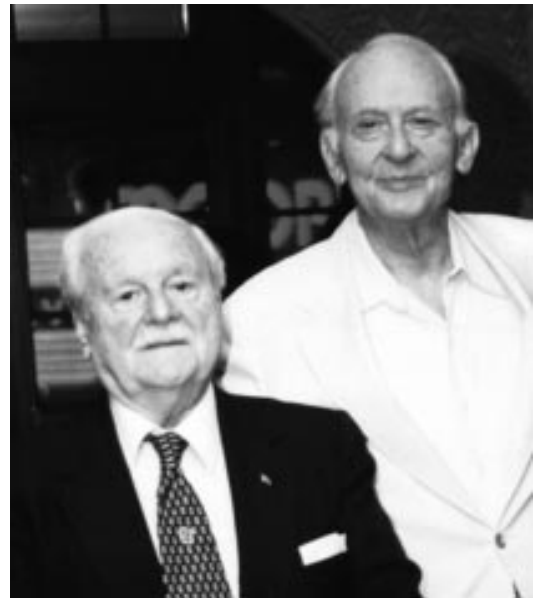
Structural changes in the AFM seem to be needed, but as you work on that problem, I hope you won't lose sight of the fact that structure, no matter how well designed, is only as good as an active membership makes it, and only as good as it serves to strengthen the union as a whole.

The story of "A Thousand People in the Street" (*International Musician*, April, 1997) teaches the lesson: Unity and activity among the musicians themselves, assistance from the Local, the International, and the King County Labor movement—that's the way unions are supposed to function, and that's the way they win their struggles.

I was not able to be one of the thousand in Seattle, but my wife and I expressed our solidarity with the UPS strikers by joining their nearest picket line. They, too, won their fight by member activity and unity with the support of the whole labor movement.

Musicians have much to offer and much to gain in the reinvigorated labor movement. Good luck as you work toward a better structured and more active AFM.

Russell V. Brodine
St. Louis Symphony, retired



ICSOM Emeritus member Frank Ruggieri (left), retired New York Philharmonic bassoonist, keeps plenty busy for a nonagenarian. He is Conductor Emeritus of the Ocean City (NJ) Pops Orchestra, which recently presented a concert in honor of another ICSOM Emeritus, retired Philadelphia Orchestra bassoonist Sol Schoenbach (right).

"Voicings" graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster (bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)

Newslets

1 (800) ROAD-GIG is no more. Following a decision by the International Executive Board in September, the AFM's toll-free number was discontinued on January 1, 1998. The IEB estimates this may save the AFM up to \$21,000 per year.

Musicians who need help from the AFM should remember that their local, under Article 5, Section 34 of the AFM Bylaws, is obligated to pay for out-of-pocket expenditures, including long-distance phone calls, by the orchestra committee when they are assisting the local in contract administration and negotiations.



On December 5, 1997 the **Theatre Musicians Association became the fifth players' conference of the AFM**, joining ICSOM OCSM, ROPA, and RMA.



The five players' conferences will all meet together this summer at the first-ever **Unity Conference**, to be held August 19 – 23, 1998 at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.



The **ICSOM CD-ROM** is now completed and available. It contains the current and past collective bargaining agreements of all ICSOM orchestras and most OCSM, ROPA, theatre, and other orchestras; AFM electronic media agreements; ICSOM bulletins; the complete archives of *Senza Sordino*; AFM Bylaws; ICSOM financials and conference minutes. All ICSOM delegates have been sent a copy for use by their orchestras. Any other ICSOM musicians who would like a copy may purchase one by sending a check for \$10.00, payable to ICSOM, to Robert Levine at his address below.

In addition to the ICSOM Governing Board, many people around the country work diligently on behalf of ICSOM and its members. Many thanks to all those who have served so well, and without compensation, except for the satisfaction of knowing that they have helped make life in ICSOM orchestras a little better. Among the most notable ICSOM "special agents" are:

Abe Torchinsky (Philadelphia Orchestra, retired)
ICSOM Emeritus Program Director

Tom Hall (Chicago Symphony)
ICSOM Conference Coordinator

Brad Buckley (St. Louis Symphony)
AFM Electronic Media Negotiator

Bill Buchman (Chicago Symphony)
ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Coordinator

Herb Winslow (St. Paul Chamber Orchestra)
ICSOM Strike Fund Trustee

and

Anonymous

(from an orchestra that slogs through a lot of lake effect snow)
Senza Sordino Liaison

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Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 36, NO. 2

March 1998

MUSICIANS MEET AT MEANY AFM Labor Activists Get An Education

by Mary Carroll Plaine
Librarian and Orchestra Committee Chair,
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large

Just like my colleagues in orchestras around the country, when I receive my issue of *Senza Sordino*, what do I see but yet another front-page article discussing the problems of the American Federation of Musicians? How does this affect me? Why should I care? Does it matter if the national union is having financial problems? My local reduced our work dues a few years ago, pays for our lawyer when we negotiate our collective bargaining agreement, and is always supportive. Isn't that the way it is for everyone out there?

Definitely not. Loyal readers of *Senza* have only to review the past year's issues to read of the problems faced by the Louisville Orchestra when its local didn't behave in the best interests of its working musicians.

For five days in January, 15 members of the American Federation of Musicians, representing a diverse range of backgrounds and current employment status, took part in a first-of-its-kind training program at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies. While workshops on a variety of topics are given at The Meany Center year-round, there had never been one designed specifically for members of the AFM. Hopefully, based on the reaction of those of us who participated, this will not be the last.

The AFL-CIO operates the George Meany Center for Labor Studies on a 47-acre campus of green lawns, large trees, and brick buildings just outside Washington, D.C. in Silver Spring, a Maryland suburb. The campus contains a library, dormitories, cafeteria, meeting and classroom spaces, and an area for informal mixing at night. A portion of our union dues helps pay for the staff and facilities at the Meany Center, which is "the only union conference center in the United States exclusively available to all AFL-CIO affiliates and their locals. Because of that unique quality, labor leaders from many unions can expect to interact and exchange ideas in a warm and stimulating atmosphere of trade union solidarity." The week I was in attendance, other groups which were meeting included the Communications Workers of America, the Sheet Metal Workers, and the Transport Workers Union. There was also a gathering of building trades organizers, and there were seminars pertaining to arbitration. The Center sets a schedule of classes which are open to anyone belonging to an AFL-CIO affiliate.

Attendees of the Meany Center seminars were James Clute (Minnesota Orchestra and ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large); Dr. Art Davis (Executive Board, Local 47, Los Angeles); Mary Landolfi (Vice President, Local 802, New York City); Frank Donaruma (Chair, American Ballet Theatre Orchestra Committee, New York City); Dennis Mackrel (Jazz Advisory Committee, New York City); Jimmy Owens (Chair, Jazz Advisory Committee, New York City); Mary Plaine (Chair, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Players' Committee and ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large); Dick Simon (New York Philharmonic); James Sims (President, Dallas Theatre Musicians Association); Blair Tindall (Chair, Broadway Theater Musicians Committee); Dave Titcomb (Chair, New York City Opera Orchestra Committee); Peter Vriesenga (President, Local 20-623, Denver); and Sharon Yamada, New York Philharmonic Orchestra Committee).

Those in attendance at our meetings were local organizers, local officers, ICSOM orchestra musicians, theatre musicians, free-lance musicians, and jazz musicians—all AFM members. Local 802 (New York City) was the impetus behind the week's activities taking place. Invitations were extended to members of Local 802 and ICSOM leadership, and through them to other ICSOM members and local officers and their boards. Although many of the musicians contacted were excited about the workshops and wanted to attend, only a few could create the time in their busy schedules on admittedly short notice.

The five days began on Sunday afternoon and continued with morning and afternoon sessions through Thursday. The evenings

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were left free for unstructured group discussions, “homework,” practicing, or just relaxing. We were welcomed by the Center’s Executive Director Susan Schurman and the Director for Noncredit Programs, Don Spatz, who laid down three laws to live by during our stay: The Center is a safe haven for all union brothers and sisters, so it is not the place to make any “unkind or unwelcome comments about their union or their person;” harassment of any kind will not be tolerated; and during classroom time there is to be no trashing of the International or other leaders of one’s union.

We were led through a brief history of unionism. There was a lecture on trends in economics, and how unions, and the lack of unions, affect the economy. We heard about the AFL-CIO’s goals and initiatives. One of the goals is for unions to commit 30% of their dues to organizing new members. We talked about bargaining power. We were anxious to discuss our union, but first the instructors wanted to give us a background in trade unionism and what it is that makes a union work well.

One of the points that was made to us was that in order for a union to work well, it must have what the AFL-CIO has termed the “Five Core Competencies of Effective Labor Organizations.” These are 1) organizing the relevant labor market(s) by industry, craft/occupation, and spatial/geography; 2) representing workers’ interests in the economy/workplace; 3) representing workers’ interests in the political/legislative arena; 4) building strong coalition rela-

tionships with allies and potential allies; and 5) governing and administering the union, requiring both political and management skills.

When we finally did begin to explore the topic of musicians as workers, the trainer led us through some “ice-breaking” exercises, at which we as a group of students in a classroom failed rather miserably, especially considering that as performers we are such creative people. Then we got down to business, discussing how musicians are similar to other workers and how we are different, what our shared values as musicians are, and why the AFM is important to its members.

We explored the structures and operations of unions and examined that of our own. Meany staff members talked to us about “building a culture of organizing” through educating members and generating commitment and resources.

On Wednesday evening there was a “chautauqua” where Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute told us all we needed to know about the economy in 20 minutes. Following his enjoyable talk was “Labor’s Troubadour,” singer Joe Glazer.

On Thursday before the workshops ended we discussed community labor councils and building coalitions. The AFL-CIO is now promoting actions it terms “Street Heat,” where all union members are encouraged to gather and support fellow workers at a designated location and time. Here in Baltimore, for instance, there is a service station where union members are encouraged to picket once a month at a set time to protest the company’s treatment of its employees at its refineries.

On a personal level, I found the time I spent at the Meany Center to be very valuable and wish I had had the opportunity to have such a week of training years earlier. It was an “attitude-adjusting” experience to work not only with symphonic colleagues but also with jazz musicians, free-lancers, local officers and organizers. It became painfully clear that our union, like others, has been subject at times to the “-isms” of race, sex and class.

Just as in the symphonic industry we may be watching our audiences slowly diminish, due in part to a lack of music education in our schools, there is a similar problem in many unions, including ours. Trade unionism in the current AFM structure is not being actively promoted. Many AFM members view their membership as if they were a member of a guild: the AFM is a closed shop, a protection agency with the payoff of the all-important death benefit. If those of us who work under collective bargaining agreements cut ourselves off from other musicians who are not so well-off as we, we will wake up someday to the sad fact that there are plenty of non-organized workers out there who can replace us. Just as the next generation concert audience is not being groomed, workers who believe that belonging to a union and fighting collectively on issues is better than having every individual fight for him/herself are not being trained.

We symphonic players must take an interest in the future of the AFM if we are to maintain and improve upon our past 35 years’ gains in benefits and working conditions. We must work collectively to see that all our colleagues are earning living wages, working in safe environments, have access to affordable health care—and that

Before departing the Meany Center on Thursday afternoon, the participants spent a great deal of time creating a document which seemed to sum up the consensus of the class. The following ideas are intended to promote a constructive dialogue concerning the future of our union and all working musicians:

1. That there should be one international union that includes all professional musicians regardless of style, genre, or location of employment. We must organize in order to bring the benefits of union membership and representation to encompass areas under-represented in the past: for example, Jazz, Rock, Latin, Country-Western, and others.
2. That our union should be structured according to the democratic principle “one musician, one vote.”
3. That both the international body and its subdivisions must be restructured effectively. The union must allocate sufficient resources to organize musicians in their varied workplaces and to represent their interests with employers. We must also build strong coalitions with organized labor, educational institutions, and in the political arena.

We firmly believe that only by committing our resources to the above ideals will the AFM be able to effectively organize and represent musicians in the 21st century.

We encourage our colleagues and leadership to avail themselves of the educational resources of the AFL-CIO. We invite the active participation of all our friends and allies in achieving the goal of a stronger AFM.

our union is capable of spearheading those fights for us. If we don't get actively involved in this restructuring process, it will be done for us, possibly TO us, and, most likely, we will not like the results.

The Meany Center does not exist to provide its members with answers, easy or otherwise, to problems a union may be experiencing. But through education, training, and research, the Center hopes to provide union members with knowledge and leadership to find solutions to issues that all unions face, ours included.

I hope that ICSOM and the other Player Conferences will have a meaningful Unity Conference in August and that we all will be able to debate the pros and cons of our current Federation structure and what our ideal would be. I would encourage all the readers of *Senza* to review and consider the Big Questions listed in the box to the right and if possible, to avail themselves of training at the Meany Center. For more information about the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, please write to

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Toward UNITY 1998:

Investigative Task Force Progress Report

The Investigative Task Force (ITF), the group formed by resolution of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA and RMA at last summer's conferences to study AFM restructure, met in February in Milwaukee. The ITF, which is evenly composed of players' conference representatives and AFM local officers, spent two and a half days discussing the basic principles on which the AFM should be run.

Present were Andrew Brandt (President, ROPA), Dennis Dreith (President, RMA), James Ewen (2nd Vice-President, OCSM), Robert Levine (Chairperson, ICSOM), Art Linsner (Vice-President, TMA), Bill Moriarity (President, Local 802), Jimmy Nixon (President, Local 105), Paul Sharpe (President, Local 279), Richard Totusek (Treasurer, Local 47), Denise Westby (President, Local 99). The group was assisted by Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel, and Don Spatz of the George Meany Center.

The group came to formal agreement on a few general principles, most notably on the trade union purpose of the AFM, the need to more equitably distribute the burden of funding the AFM, and the negative effect of employers serving as local officers. It was agreed to ask Ron Bauers to help identify existing administrative inefficiencies that impact the union's cost of doing business.

Also agreed was that the Unity Conference (Las Vegas, August 19-23, 1998) was the target date for presenting a first draft restructure proposal, and that AFM President Steve Young would be invited to the next ITF meeting, which is scheduled for Shreveport in early April. Members of the ITF will also interview AFM staff in New York during the March meeting of the IEB.

One of the many handouts we received in our classes was entitled "Big Questions: Taking a Hard Look at Our Union." These questions were not created specifically for AFM members but pertain to it as well as every other trade union.

The Big Questions are:

1. What kind of Union do we want to be?
 What should the role of the Union be at work?
 What should the role of the Union be in our industry?
 What should the role of the Union be in the economy, in politics and in the community?
 What should the relationship(s) be between the Union (officers and staff) and the members?
 Can we write up "Statement of Principles" or "Vision Statement" that expresses what our Union aspires to be and to achieve?
2. How does our union measure up to our "Vision" or "Principles?"
3. What are the greatest external threat(s) to our union?
4. What are the greatest internal threat(s) to our Union?
5. Are we as strong and powerful at work as we would like to be?
 Are we as strong in our industry as we would like to be?
 Are we as strong and influential in the economy, in politics and in the community as we would like to be?
 If not, why not? What are the current and the potential consequences?
6. Do our members appreciate the union or participate in the union as much as we would like them to?
 If not, why not? What are the current and the potential consequences?
7. Is it important for us to organize the unorganized?
8. Why is it so hard for us to organize the unorganized?
9. How can our Union become more powerful at work? In the industry? In the economy? In politics? In the community?
10. How can we be a more democratic union?
11. What specific things could we accomplish if we were bigger and stronger and/or more influential in the community?
12. What are the internal obstacles we face in trying to become bigger, stronger and more influential? What are the external obstacles?
13. What are the internal obstacles to members appreciating the Union more and participating more in the Union?
 What are the external obstacles?
14. How can we overcome these obstacles?
15. Is it worth trying? What are the risks of making changes?
 What are the risks of not making changes?

1997-98 Wage Chart of ICSOM Orchestras — *compiled by ICSOM Treasurer Stephanie Tretick*

Orchestra	Weeks 97-98	Annual Minimum Salary	Seniority: 40-yr Cap if no max	EMG	Pension: 40-yr Cap if no max	Pension Type	Pension Based on Min/Prsnl Scale	Vacation Weeks	Relief Weeks	Notes	Orchestra
Atlanta	52	56,056	58,136	2,860	3.75%	AFM-EP	m	8	2 services	1 personal leave day.	Atlanta
Baltimore	53	58,300	62,540	0	19,500			8	16 services		Baltimore
Boston	52	80,340	85,964	0	43,500			10	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	At least 22 wks = 5 day weeks	Boston
Buffalo	35	26,800	28,025	1,550	3.5%	AFM-EP	m+EMG	none	none		Buffalo
Chicago Lyric	24	36,960	38,438	0	9%	AFM-EP	p	15%/gross	1 opera relief, prin & asst.prin	Overtime not included in salary.	Chicago Lyric
Chicago Sym	52	81,900	89,674	0	48,000			8	2, plus 1 subscription & 2 summer programs		Chicago Sym
Cincinnati	52	69,030	70,590	2,860	22,000+4%	AFM-EP	m	9	16 services for strings		Cincinnati
Cleveland	52	79,060	87,380	0	36,000			10	none		Cleveland
Colorado	41	25,625	27,265	4,100	7%	AFM-EP/DCP	p	4	7 personal svcs		Colorado
Columbus	46	42,504	43,424	0	7.5%	DCP	p	4	6 services personal leave		Columbus
Dallas	52	58,890	60,970	6,760	23,040			9	12 string services		Dallas
Detroit	53	76,850	78,970	1,534	30,000			9	8 services for strings & 2nd winds		Detroit
Florida Orch	34	23,800	24,820	170	4%	AFM-EP	p	3	4 svc, strings		Florida Orch
Florida Phil	43	35,000	36,075	0	8%	AFM-EP	m	4	12 svcs strings, prin & 2nd wwnds & 2nd brass	Annual "in residence adjustment" of \$800 in addition to salary.	Florida Phil
Grant Park	10	10,091	10,091	0	10%	AFM-EP	p	none	none	Salary includes special services & health & welfare.	Grant Park
Honolulu	28	20,800	22,060	0	5%	AFM-EP	p	none	none		Honolulu
Houston	N/A										Houston
Indianapolis	52	54,600	57,720	0	28,800			8.5	8 svc stg/1&2ww/prin brss/2nd hn,pt/timp		Indianapolis
Jacksonville	38	26,679	28,407	0	2.5%	AFM-EP	p	2	6 svc	Seniority is approx, using formula: \$.15 X yrly svcs X yrs svc	Jacksonville
Kennedy Center	26	14,850	17,450	0	7%	AFM-EP	p	4% of personal scale	none	Season under 2 contracts:opera and ballet/musical.	Kennedy Center
Los Angeles	53	81,900	86,140	2,000	6%	AFM-EP	m	10	+ 1 week strings, 2nd winds	Pension = 10% for those retiring before 9/19/99.	Los Angeles
Louisville	40	23,056	23,676	1,755	500/yr	AFM-EP	m	4	none		Louisville
Met Opera	52	85,353	85,353	0	60%		p	10	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	Salary incl avg reh pay. Addl Radio agrmnt: 21 brdcsts @ \$239.48.	Met Opera
Milwaukee	44	48,092	49,484	0	5%	AFM-EP	p	6	8 services		Milwaukee
Minnesota	52	70,850	72,410	3,250	30,000			8.5	6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings		Minnesota
National	52	74,360	86,060	0	35,000			8	1 week + 1 week for strings		National
New Jersey	33	28,875	29,741	825	9%	AFM-EP	m	2	none	2 addl wks work w community outreach.	New Jersey
North Carolina	40.5	32,400	33,413	0	8.5%	403(b)	m	4	4 services personal leave	Salary + 4 optional summer weeks = \$35,600.	North Carolina
New York Phil	52	81,120	86,744	0	43,500			9	1 of the 9 vacation weeks	All players receive add'l min. \$20/wk overscale.	New York Phil
NYC Ballet	30	41,800	44,425	0	12%/gross	AFM-EP	p	4	none		NYC Ballet
NYC Opera	29	32,242	34,272	0	10%	AFM-EP	p	4	none	Base does not include rehearsal pay.	NYC Opera
Oregon	43	33,928	33,928	506	8.5%	AFM-EP	p	2.5	none		Oregon
Philadelphia	52	80,600	86,580	0	46,000			10	1 of the 10 vac wks + 4 pers days & 2 days at Saratoga		Philadelphia
Phoenix	36	23,760	25,020	0	3%	403(b)	m	2	none		Phoenix
Pittsburgh	52	75,510	78,630	0	35,000			10	11th deferred service week possible		Pittsburgh
Rochester	40	30,600	31,530	0	2.5%	DCP	m	3	none		Rochester
Saint Louis	52	66,300	71,500	0	28,000			9	1 of the 9 vacation weeks	2 extra wks vac poss w volunteer work in Comm Partnrsh Prg.	Saint Louis
Saint Paul Chamber	38	52,592	54,192	1,200	9%	403(b)	p	4	1 of 4 = relief week for all		Saint Paul Chamber
San Antonio	39	28,548	30,108	0	6%	AFM-EP	p	4	none	5th vacation week possible with community svc program.	San Antonio
San Diego	N/A										San Diego
SF Ballet	21	28,398	29,686	1,112	10%	AFM-EP	p	13% of base	none	Sal incl vac pay. Yrly contract guar = 105 perms.+102 reh.	SF Ballet
SF Opera	29	52,085	53,085	1,815	9%	AFM-EP	p	4	1 opera every other season for stgs	Vacation is in addition to 25 season weeks	SF Opera
SF Symphony	52	80,340	85,020	1,560	37,000	0	0	10	3 of the 10 = floating, 1 extra (11th) wk for 2nd wnds		SF Symphony
Syracuse	38	23,878	24,478	0	.0046	private	p	4	none		Syracuse
Utah	52	38,532	40,092	0	8%	EP/403(b)	m	9	none		Utah

Campaigning From The Bass Line

ICSOM Treasurer Stephanie Tretick was recently published in "Behind the Scenes," a regular column in The Strad magazine. This article appeared in the November 1997 issue and is reprinted here with permission. (The British spellings have been retained to enhance the flavour. – ed.)

ICSOM is the acronym for the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, a volunteer organisation within the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), established in 1962 by delegates from U.S. and Canadian orchestras. In addition to my duties since 1980 as a violist in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, I have served as the PSO's ICSOM delegate for ten years, and have held positions on ICSOM's governing board for the last seven years.

ICSOM's charter states that the organisation was formed for "the promotion of a better and more rewarding livelihood for the skilled orchestral performer and the enrichment of the cultural life of our society." At the time of ICSOM's formation, the AFM often did not grant orchestral musicians the right to ratify their own contracts even though this had been long observed by almost all other trade unions. Typically, the local musicians' union would privately negotiate a contract with the orchestra manager and present it to the orchestra members as a *fait accompli*. In those days, if an orchestra objected to this lack of direct representation at the bargaining table, the union rarely supported complaining musicians.

When they attempted to enter into the negotiations, players were threatened with fines or even expulsion from the union, with some of the situations escalating into litigation. Through the efforts of ICSOM the situation improved. Although ICSOM has nonvoting representation at the AFM convention, it was instrumental in creating a collaboration with the Federation, and the improved climate fostered more effective negotiations, reshaping the entire symphonic industry of North America. Orchestral jobs evolved into full-time work, with competitive wages, health insurance and pensions.

ICSOM holds an annual conference in late August. All delegates and the governing board, along with observers from foreign orchestras, the musicians' unions and associated fields, assemble for five busy days. In addition to plenary sessions there is ample opportunity for delegates to network, strategise and socialise.

Serving as an ICSOM delegate is intriguing, but it also carries responsibility. As the delegate of the Pittsburgh Symphony I must report to other orchestras about what is happening in Pittsburgh, especially when contract negotiations are ongoing. Conversely, I bring home the latest news from other orchestras. During the past year the ICSOM orchestras were involved in developments concerning our colleagues of the Philadelphia, San Francisco and Atlanta symphony orchestras, who were in contract negotiations and were striking. In all three cases ICSOM-member orchestras responded with letters of support, petitions and monetary donations.

The amount of paperwork for a delegate is significant. ICSOM collects data from its member orchestras on a regular basis, including figures for the yearly Wage and Pension Chart, a roster of members and a conductor evaluation programme. Surveys on topics including what sorts of chairs players prefer, how we deal with noise levels on stage, whether we prefer playing on the flat or on risers, work-related health issues, hall renovations and what kind of lighting is most effective, keep us busy, too.

Because the conference period is so densely scheduled with meetings there is little time for much else, certainly not practicing, so most delegates leave their instruments at home. Because of this, it's only by tabulation at roll call that delegates get associated with the instruments they play for a living. Then it becomes oddly apparent that players of orchestral instruments of lower tessituras predominate in the ICSOM family. This year's conference boasted eight basses, seven violas, five bassoons, five cellos, four horns, three trombones and two tubas—about 70% of the total delegates! The delegates always enjoy making reference to this curious bass line tendency, and the subject invariably spawns a few new viola jokes!

Once a conference has finished, the ICSOM family continues to stay in touch during the year, energised by the conference and the connections made there. What a wonderful sense of community to look down a listing of the 45 ICSOM orchestras and realise that I have colleagues in every one.

*Stephanie Tretick
Pittsburgh Symphony ICSOM Delegate
ICSOM Treasurer*



(photo by Stephanie Tretick, of her work area at last summer's ICSOM conference)

A Message from the ICSOM Governing Board

The ICSOM Governing Board wishes to describe a serious situation unfolding in Milwaukee involving an ICSOM orchestra and a ROPA orchestra.

The managements of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and the Milwaukee Ballet have announced that they are discussing having MSO musicians serve as the orchestra for the ballet, thereby displacing all 40 musicians of the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra (MBO).

As is widely known, ICSOM Chair Robert Levine is also a member of the MSO and an officer of the Milwaukee Musicians' Association, AFM Local #8. In a letter to the ICSOM Governing Board on February 24, Robert withdrew from any participation in the Governing Board's consideration of this issue. He informed us that he did so in order that any actions which might be taken by the Governing Board in this situation would be perceived as driven by nothing other than ICSOM's obligation to the principles of trade unionism and to its member orchestras. We believe that in removing himself from any discussion of this matter by the Governing Board, Robert Levine has acted appropriately and ethically, and we support his decision.

Nevertheless, the ICSOM Governing Board is not restrained from action on this issue, and it strongly urges the musicians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra to refuse to take over the work currently performed by their colleagues in the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra.

In recent years, we have seen similar situations. We witnessed the musicians of the Boca Pops Orchestra of Florida willingly cross the picket line of the musicians of the Miami City Ballet, who were likewise being collectively fired by their management. This was, in our opinion, a total collapse of trade unionism and collegiality.

On the other hand, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra musicians refused to replace the musicians of the Minnesota Opera, and National Symphony musicians refused to act as a ballet pit orchestra replacing the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. In both cases, the resolve of the symphony musicians and their commitment to trade unionism saved the jobs of the pit musicians.

We urge the musicians of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra to give careful consideration to these recent occurrences in making their position known to their management.

The ICSOM Governing Board



Several other ICSOM musicians in addition to Mary Plaine attended the Meany Center program for musicians. The following are comments by two of them, as published in the March 1998 issue of Allegro, newsletter of AFM Local 802 (New York City):



I worry that the individual interest groups—like RMA, ICSOM, ROPA, etc.—may disintegrate into many separate satellites before we have a chance to restructure. The answer lies in these various interest groups, along with the large locals, because that's where the most active working musicians are involved right now. What's needed is a solid restructuring that can keep these groups consolidated and meet their needs at the same time. I think the Unity Conference this summer will be the perfect opportunity to really address the problems of working musicians.

*David Titcomb
Chair, NYC Opera Orchestra Committee*



One of the most stimulating things we did was to attack the grand notion that, as musicians, we are different from other workers in the labor force and therefore employers should treat us differently. After all, how can an artist possibly maintain his or her integrity and be involved in unionism? Aren't the two in total conflict?

This question, above all, brought home for many of us the personal struggle we endure in our artistic selves, resolving the conflict between that which we idealize and the brutality of our social and economic realities. For me, in a most personal way, it was the most liberating moment of the entire week. This recognition was something I had avoided confronting in myself for many years, and it was only with all of us finding such a common ground on this and other issues that I was able to honestly open myself to it. Thank you all!

The result of our brief education (which I hope to continue) was to turn upside-down many of my lifelong assumptions about musicians and the music industry, with respect to labor and unionism. Most important was the realization that many other industries have similar labor problems, and that in this respect we are not so different.

*Richard Simon
New York Philharmonic*

"Voicings" graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster (bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)

Newslets (Or, Life Is The Pits)

The Denver Musicians' Association, Local 20-623 AFM, reports that although a live orchestra was preserved for the **Colorado Ballet's** 1997 *Nutcracker* production, future use of tape to displace the ballet orchestra is still a threat. Ken Davies, webmaster of the Denver Musicians' Association website, has created a very detailed and entertaining webpage about the dance-to-tape issue, viewable at www.dmamusic.org/coloballet/coloballet.html, and asks "AFM members from all over the country to view the information and contribute opinions for posting on this matter." Ken adds, "Let's make everyone aware of this unaesthetic and unethical use of technology to degrade the contributions of professional musicians. Remember that this kind of thing could circle around to your town in more ways than ballet."

Ballet companies may displace musicians with a recording, or a synthesizer, or with other musicians. As reported by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the **Milwaukee Ballet Company** has proposed that the Milwaukee Symphony become its pit orchestra, claiming that "outsourcing musical services would enable the premier dance company and the premier musical organization in the state to collaborate. It would take the ballet company out of the business of running an orchestra . . . and it would lead to administrative efficiencies." It would also lead to putting the 40-member Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra out of work.

The "pitting" of one group of union musicians against another is not new. In 1996, during the Kennedy Center Orchestra's contract negotiations, the National Symphony was invited to take over a portion of the work of the Kennedy Center Orchestra. In 1994 the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra musicians faced threats of their own organization's bankruptcy unless they broke the strike of the Minnesota Opera musicians and took their work away. In both cases, union musicians supported each other and everyone kept his job. (See "A Message from the ICSOM Governing Board" on page 7.)

And even if entire pit orchestras aren't destroyed in one fell swoop, individual musicians can sometimes be picked off one by one. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, "an *Aida* soldier created a lot of audience concern when his spear wound up down in the orchestra pit. 'One of the musicians was hit by it, but she's fine,' said Laura Silver, the PR woman for the **Minnesota Opera**." In another incident, a Houston Symphony player was hit and startled, but not harmed, by an errant prop during the **Houston Opera's** production of *Billy Budd*.

But not all pit mishaps are humorous or inconsequential. Objects falling into the pit have caused instrument damage and career-ending injuries. There are also continuing concerns about the health hazards of theatrical fog and pyrotechnics. From job insecurities and property damage to personal injury and illness, working in the pit can be a risky business.

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ICSOM Orchestras

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
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
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\$10 per year, payable to
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c/o Marsha Schweitzer
905 Spencer Street #404
Honolulu HI 96822



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Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 36, NO. 3

May 1998

Kansas City Symphony Joins ICSOM

At the August 1995 ICSOM Conference the ICSOM Membership Committee issued this Report (taken from the minutes of the 1995 ICSOM Conference):

ICSOM Secretary Lucinda-Lewis chaired the Membership Committee. The other members of the Committee were David Angus and Jim Clute. . . . Lewis explained that the Kansas City Symphony presented a very unique problem for the Committee. It met all three of the basic requirements for membership, but it did not have a union recognition clause in its contract. The members of the Kansas City Symphony had been trying to negotiate such a clause into their labor agreement without success. It was the recommendation of the Committee that Kansas City be granted membership in ICSOM when it achieved union recognition from the employer.

The delegates voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the Membership Committee.

The necessary union recognition, and thus ICSOM membership, arrived in Kansas City in May 1998 with the ratification of a "breakthrough contract unprecedented among American symphony orchestras," as described in a joint statement released by the management and musicians of the Kansas City Symphony. "The contract is a perpetually extended 'evergreen' agreement of nine years' duration that contains provisions for no strikes or lockouts as well as features for joint problem solving. This agreement between Local 34-627 and the Kansas City Symphony spans from July 1, 1998 through the 2006-2007 season.

"Under this ground-breaking nine-year contract, compensation, title pay, and pension benefits have been determined for the first three years. These main economic items (compensation, title pay and pension benefits) for the second three-year period (years four, five and six) will be established in year two of the contract, and the cycle will be repeated similarly thereafter. When these items have been agreed upon, a new nine-year contract will be in effect. Under this agreement, musician compensation, title pay and pension benefits will be guided by key economic targets established through 'benchmarking' peer group orchestras.*

"The contract allows for musician compensation and service structures to be equalized by moving all Symphony musicians to full contract status over the first three years of the agreement (presently the Kansas City Symphony has a three-tier compensation structure). The contract contains a 'service exchange' provision, allowing for the expansion of the Symphony's innovative Community Connections Initiative outreach and education

program. The contract also establishes the first formal pension program for the musicians of the Kansas City Symphony.

"For the first time since the Kansas City Symphony was established in 1982, and by unanimous vote of the Symphony's Board of Directors, the American Federation of Musicians is recognized through this agreement as the collective bargaining representative of the musicians.

"The agreement facilitates participatory management and governance structure through enhanced involvement of Symphony musicians on the Board of Directors and on standing Board committees. The contract allows for three voting Board positions to be filled by musicians in a commitment to further increase the open communication already developed. In the spirit of this agreement, other elements of the contract may be revised at any time by mutual agreement, and issues of concern to both parties will be discussed as an ongoing process.

"Brian Rood, spokesperson for the Musicians' Committee, commented that 'this is an integral step forward for the Kansas City Symphony. By moving all our musicians to full-time status, and bringing salaries, title pay, and pension contributions in line with our peers, we will be better able to achieve our goal of artistic excellence. In addition, union recognition offers us opportunities in recruitment, pension, and national recognition not available previously.'

"A task force comprised of Musician Committee Members, Symphony Staff, and members of the Symphony Board was assembled in the fall of 1997 and completed its findings in January 1998. The contract was negotiated throughout February and March 1998 based upon the recommendations of the task force.

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DISSONANCE

A HISTORY OF DISSENT IN THE AFM

Unions in America have struggled since their beginning with issues of internal control, governance, and purity of purpose. There usually exists a genuine desire on the part of workers and union officials to make better jobs and better lives for working people, but discord can sometimes result from the belief among workers that their interests get lost in a maze of union bureaucracy, corruption, incompetence, or greed.

Some union officials, having learned from management the techniques of intimidation, threats, abuse of power, and propaganda, find it too easy to turn those tactics against their own union members, if necessary, to get them to accept an unpalatable contract or to impede rank-and-file attempts to democratize the union. It has also proven to be especially hard in America, the land of rugged individualism, for people to understand the concept of collectivism. All too often, rather than band together for the common good, workers scab each other's work, locals fight other locals for dominance, and employers take full advantage of such internal union discord, sometimes rendering the efforts of even honest, competent union leaders ineffective.

The AFM, like many other unions, is plagued by fundamental and persistent conflicts, most of which have been with us since the very beginning of our union. AFM history is punctuated by a series of eruptions generated by conflicting union ideologies and tensions between subgroups within the union. While each intra-union battle has ended with some progress being made to right the wrongs perceived by the rebels, most of the original problems of the AFM are still with us to some extent, among them 1) national unity vs. local autonomy; 2) musicians as aristocratic artists vs. musicians as working laborers; 3) full-time working musicians vs. non-musicians and "weekend warriors," which can also be described as trade union function vs. social and protective functions; 4) local territoriality and jurisdictional disputes; and 5) competition from foreign interests, students, military musicians, traveling bands, and new technologies. Our straining over these issues began at the very beginning, with the founding of the American Federation of Musicians.

The Birth of the AFM

Trade unionism for musicians began, not in response to workplace concerns, but as an outgrowth of social, fraternal and protective associations. During the mid-19th century, musicians in many cities began to coalesce around "benevolent programs which they had set up; a program of death benefits was most typical. The musicians' organizations were interested in presenting programs for the entertainment of the public, planning affairs for their own enjoyment, and engaging in 'social hilarity.' Only late in the century were attempts made to enforce performance price lists."¹ The first organization of musicians clearly formed as a trade union was incorporated in New York City in 1863.

During the next decade many cities formed musicians' unions.

These separate local organizations were successfully brought together into a national body in 1886 with the founding of the **National League of Musicians (NLM)**. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), formed in 1881, repeatedly sought the affiliation of the fledgling NLM, and was repeatedly turned down, primarily because the majority of musicians in the NLM did not want to be associated with the laboring likes of the manufacturing and construction unions that made up the AFL. "The faction opposing affiliation maintained that musicians had little in common with other workers or their unions, and that the musicians union would suffer a loss in dignity and prestige by affiliation."¹ Unable to bring the entire NLM into their fold, the AFL proceeded to charter the local unions directly, and by 1895 a large majority of the NLM locals were affiliated with the AFL.

"The convention of the AFL in 1895 authorized President Samuel Gompers to give the NLM one final opportunity to join the AFL. The understanding was that a new national union would be organized if the offer should be rejected. When the NLM, by a tie vote, decided not to join the AFL, Gompers issued a call for a national convention of musicians unions to meet on October 19, 1896. . . . The convention successfully organized the **American Federation of Musicians (AFM)**, and received a national charter on November 6, 1896."¹ Thus, the formation of the AFM was itself an act of dissension and dual unionism.

Local 310

By 1904 the NLM had disintegrated, but the primary group of NLM musicians who had opposed affiliation with the AFL, the **Musical Mutual Protective Union (MMPU)**, remained as an independent union in New York City. The AFM recruited the non-MMPU musicians in New York and chartered Local 7, then Local 41, attempting all the while to bring the MMPU into the AFM fold. Finally the effort succeeded, and in 1903, Local 310 was chartered as an amalgamation of the MMPU and the AFM.

In 1920 the New York theatre managers, unhappy with the contract terms offered by Local 310, appealed to the national union. AFM President Joseph Weber stepped in and settled with the theatres. A faction of Local 310 musicians resented Weber's intrusion into the local's affairs, and that group gained control of the local's board of directors. A battle over local autonomy ensued, and Weber had the contentious board members expelled from the union. [A similar scenario was played out by Petrillo and the recording musicians of Local 47 in 1955. See "James Petrillo: Leader of the Ban" on page 7.]

The MMPU had been incorporated under the laws of New York and did not relinquish its state charter when it joined the AFM. The state charter of the MMPU now came back to haunt the AFM; the local's board of directors appealed Weber's expulsions to the courts, and the New York court ruled that "Weber had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Local 310 because it was incorporated under the laws of the state."¹ When Local 310 stopped honoring transfer cards deposited by members of other locals, it was suspended from the AFM.

(continued on page 4)

On The Road To **UNITY**

The ICSOM-OCSM-ROPA-RMA-TMA** **UNITY CONFERENCE**

August 19* – 23, 1998
The Riviera Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

UNITY AGENDA: AFM Restructure

The first-ever Unity Conference, where all five AFM players conferences will meet in unison, is less than three months away. The primary agenda item and the reason for the collective gathering is restructuring the AFM. The five players conferences represent most of the working musicians in the AFM, and at Unity, these working musicians will gather to define their common needs, develop goals, and discuss possible changes in the AFM to make it a better union.

All officers and/or delegates of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, RMA, and TMA are expected to attend, according to the terms of their respective conference bylaws. Article 5 Section 24 of the AFM Bylaws requires your local to cover "the reasonable and necessary expenses of sending one Delegate to the appropriate annual Conference of ICSOM, OCSM, or ROPA, if applicable." Observers and other guests, properly registered, will be admitted as provided in each conference's bylaws.

ICSOM participants are encouraged to book their travel and lodging through our official travel agents **Susan Levine** or **Carl King** at:

TRAVEL GEMS
381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1201
New York NY 10016
1-800-569-4495, 212-889-3131, Fax 212-889-8688
email: suetravel@aol.com

Because airline contracts often include an additional percentage discount for booking prior to 60 days before the conference date, we suggest booking your air travel and hotel room early. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Riviera for Unity Conference participants; all Riviera Hotel room block reservations *must* be made through Susan Levine or Carl King at TRAVEL GEMS.

Special Unity Conference Room Rates (in US \$):

Single/Double	\$65.00	Petite Suite	\$125.00
1 Bedroom Suite	\$250.00	2 Bedroom Suite	\$325.00

All rates are exclusive of 9% tax. Additional persons in room will be charged at the rate of \$20 per person, per night.

TO ALL UNITY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS:
Please notify Susan Levine or Carl King at Travel Gems of your planned attendance by June 16, *whether or not you are making lodging and travel arrangements through Travel Gems*. Travel Gems will serve as the central "notification of attendance" point, insuring a complete and accurate attendance roster.

Tentative Unity Schedule

<i>Tuesday, August 18</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		SSD Negotiating Workshop* (for orchestras currently negotiating)
2:30p - 5:30p		SSD Negotiating Workshop* (for orchestras negotiating next season)
<i>Wednesday, August 19</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		independent conference sessions
2:30p - 5:30p		independent conference sessions
evening		"Grand Social Event"
<i>Thursday, August 20</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		opening plenary session
2:30p - 5:30p		plenary session
<i>Friday, August 21</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		independent conference sessions
2:30p - 5:30p		independent conference sessions
<i>Saturday, August 22</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		plenary session
2:30p - 5:30p		plenary session
<i>Sunday, August 23</i>		
10:00a - 1:00p		possible independent conference sessions adjournment

* Florence Nelson and the staff of the AFM Symphonic Services Division will present a series of Negotiation Workshops just before the Unity Conference, on Tuesday, August 18. ROPA initially organized these workshops and has invited negotiating orchestras from all the conferences to join them. ICSOM negotiating orchestras are encouraged to attend. If your orchestra wishes to participate, please notify Andrew Brandt, ROPA President, at 218 Boulevard St. Shreveport LA 71104, or 318-222-5452, or andybrandt@worldnet.att.net.

** **The five AFM Players Conferences:**
International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)
Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM)
Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA)
Recording Musicians Association (RMA)
Theatre Musicians Association (TMA)

(DISSONANCE continued from page 2)

The New York theatre owners, forced by this event to choose between the warring factions, chose to bargain with the national AFM instead of Local 310, leading to the demise of the New York AFM local. New York musicians, feeling vulnerable to outside competition without an AFM local to represent them, petitioned the AFM for a new local. The void was soon filled by the chartering of Local 802 in 1921. What was left of the MMPU bowed to Local 802 and was finally dissolved in 1947. Dual unionism had ended in New York City, but the quelling of the uprising at Local 310 did little to reconcile the conflicting dogmas of local autonomy and national supremacy.

The Musicians Guild of America

The invention of the sound recording was the single most provocative event in the history of professional music. The impact on every aspect of the music business was profound and permanent. Recordings have been recognized as a blessing, making music more accessible to millions of people worldwide, but also a curse, taking away opportunities for live musicians to earn a living. Recordings even made it possible "for a musician to play at his own funeral."

Another technological advance, the motion picture, had at first been a boon to musicians, creating new jobs in vaudeville theatres to accompany silent films. But by the 1920's and '30's both recordings and movies had begun to put musicians out of work. Studio musicians at radio stations were being displaced by phonograph records, and theatre musicians were losing their jobs to the "talkies." AFM President Weber, having seen the demise of other unions that had unsuccessfully fought new technology, said, "nothing will destroy the usefulness of an organization surer than to set its face against progress, no matter how unfavorable we may at present consider same to our interests."¹

Weber's successor, James C. Petrillo, who was elected President of the AFM in 1940, was not so cautious. He worked first to stop recordings from being made, and failing that, to get musicians a share of the sizeable profits being made in these new industries. In 1942, when the recording companies refused his demands for more pay to musicians, Petrillo instituted a national ban on all phonograph and transcription recordings. It lasted more than two years and was only lifted when the record companies agreed to "pay fixed royalties to the Federation for each record and transcription made."² Those royalties went into a fund that would become the Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF), supporting live public performances and employing musicians put out of work by recorded music.

But there was a dark side to Petrillo and the MPTF. As national recording contracts were signed and musicians got raises, much of those salary increases went not to the musicians who earned them, but into the Trust Fund. It became clear that Petrillo intended to build the Trust Fund into his own political slush fund, using "the trust fund and its dispersal of monies around the country as political patronage, keeping hundreds of small locals happy literally at the expense of the working musician. . . . The voting structure of the AFM ensured that the big locals (New York, Chicago, Los

Angeles, where the majority of professional musicians lived and worked) would always be voted down by the dozens of small locals that remained in Petrillo's pocket."²

The rank-and-file musicians were struggling financially and politically, being deprived of a portion of their rightful earnings and silenced in the AFM governance structure while Petrillo's power, and his slush fund, grew larger and larger. Revolt came in 1958 with the formation of a rival union, the **Musicians Guild of America (MGA)**, led by Cecil Read of Los Angeles Local 47. In a NLRB-sanctioned election on July 12, 1958, the MGA wrested from the Federation the right to negotiate with the major studios. Dual unionism once again plagued the AFM. Explained Justin Gordon, another Local 47 dissident, "None of us were anti-union. But the union must work for you, and the AFM did everything *but* work for us; they worked against us."²

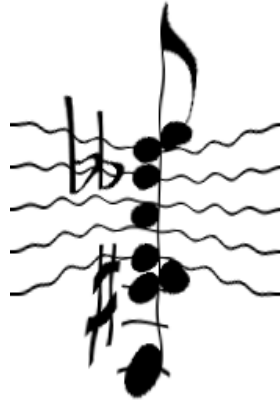
Petrillo's empire collapsed. Faced with the rise of the MGA and a growing distaste for his strong-arm tactics, Petrillo resigned as President of the AFM in 1958. By 1961, new AFM President Herman Kenin decided that it was time to coax the recording musicians back to the AFM. He offered to reconcile with the MGA, agreeing to two important reforms: ratification of national contracts by the people who do the work, and a new Special Payments Fund, representing half of the old Petrillo Trust Fund, that would at last provide royalties to musicians for their recordings. The recording musicians returned to the AFM, and the MGA was dissolved. [For more detail on Petrillo's history with the recording musicians, see "James Petrillo: Leader of the Ban" on page 7.]

The RMA

Peace in the recording industry was short-lived, however. It wasn't long before the AFM was again perceived to be neglecting the recording musicians. Working conditions soured, pay scales and residuals eroded, and the AFM was not helping to improve the situation. Feeling the need to put pressure on the AFM and become more directly involved in the negotiation process, recording musicians again united, forming the **Recording Musicians Association (RMA)** in New York in 1969.

An incident involving a nonunion "jingle house" in San Diego, Tuesday Productions, once again set fire to the smoldering relationship between recording musicians and the AFM. Tuesday, by threatening a lawsuit similar to the one that bankrupted AFTRA in 1982, coerced the AFM and President Victor Fuentealba into an agreement that did little more than put a union stamp on nonunion activity. Recording musicians were livid. "The contract represents nothing more than legitimizing nonunion conditions that have existed for years, while throwing away a quarter-century of progress that has been achieved through years of arduous negotiation."²

The "Tuesday deal" helped mobilize recording musicians from coast to coast and made the RMA a truly national association of recording musicians. RMA President Dennis Dreith said, "Up to this time, there had been a great deal of animosity and suspicion between musicians in Los Angeles and New York. The purpose of



the RMA—more than saving the jingle contract—was to create unity among recording musicians in every part of the United States and Canada.” . . . “Many Federation officials regarded the newly unified, multi-city RMA with distrust, even paranoia. . . . Said Dreith, ‘The first thing the Federation thought was: The Guild [MGA] is back. The phrase “dual unionism” was bantered around many times.’”²

Musicians continued to take issue with Fuentelba’s handling of phono negotiations, and a particularly explosive bargaining session in 1987, during which the RMA representatives walked out, almost provoked another split by the recording musicians. “Dreith—who actually had decertification papers in his briefcase, should things go completely and irrevocably wrong with the AFM—said he didn’t want to break away as the Guild had. But AFM officials weren’t sure what was happening. To some, the spectre of the Guild was back.”² Ultimately an agreement was reached and the RMA did not secede from the union, but Fuentelba’s goose was cooked. He lost the election for the AFM presidency later that year.

The RMA was formally incorporated in 1983 and, despite Federation paranoia, was granted AFM conference status in 1987. In the succeeding years a guarded but more productive relationship has developed between the AFM and its recording musicians, and the voice of RMA is being heard. The RMA was instrumental in the 1990 ousting of a destructive president of Local 47, Bernie Fleisher, and at the 1997 AFM Convention, a proposed 1/2 percent work dues increase on recordings failed in large part due to intense and vocal RMA opposition. [See “RMA Opposes Dues Increase,” *Senza Sordino*, May 1997.]

ICSOM

By 1900 all U.S. symphony orchestras had been unionized, except one—the Boston Symphony. Henry Lee Higginson, founder of the Boston Symphony, was profoundly anti-union, and when the AFM refused to make union musicians available to the nonunion BSO, he populated the BSO with mostly foreign musicians. The BSO musicians, working under substandard pay and conditions, sought to unionize several times, but failed to break the will of Higginson and the BSO board. Union recognition did not come to Boston until 1942, when Petrillo froze the BSO out of all recording and radio work, upon which they were financially dependent, and prohibited union guest artists and conductors from appearing with the BSO, until they joined the AFM.

Under strong AFM pressure, and with Higginson now out of the picture, the BSO agreed to sign that first contract with the AFM on the condition that the orchestra would be allowed to hire musicians from any part of the United States, not just from within the jurisdiction of the Boston local. The AFM complied, and the Federation bylaws were changed to allow all orchestras the same privilege of recruiting nationwide. (With this act, Petrillo may have paved the way for a national community of symphony musicians and laid the groundwork for ICSOM.)

U.S. symphony orchestras were not great places to work in the middle of this century. As reported in *Symphony* in 1952, the maximum regular season length for any orchestra was only 30 weeks, and only four orchestras—Boston, Chicago, New York, and

Philadelphia—paid a minimum living wage as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Orchestra musicians in many cities sought to improve their conditions, but found no help from their union, and sometimes even downright interference. The worst problems surfaced around 1958 in Cleveland, where orchestra musicians had to sue AFM Local 4 for the right to ratify the collective bargaining agreements negotiated on their behalf, the right to organize orchestra committees, and to collect dues from the musicians to support such committees. Similar problems were brewing in Chicago, where in 1962 the Chicago Symphony musicians filed a complaint with the NLRB against Petrillo and Local 10 over restrictions on outside jobs and denial of representation at negotiations.

By 1960, tentative plans were being made by orchestra musicians “to hold a conference of delegates from several orchestras, because of the growing feeling that common problems might have common solutions.”⁴ AFM President Herman Kenin, hoping to cut the musicians off at the pass, announced his own “Symphonic Symposium” of orchestra and union delegates, which was held in July 1960. Between 1960 and 1963 several meetings of orchestra musicians took place, some with union representatives present, others with orchestra musicians alone. The meetings with the union were unproductive. As described by a Cleveland delegate, “For the Federation it provided the opportunity to allow ‘steam to be blown off’ by orchestra representatives, to determine which way the ‘steam’ was blowing, and then to lecture the orchestra delegates, not the union delegates, on conformity and responsibility, as they conceive it to be.”⁴

A more successful meeting took place in Cleveland on September 6-8, 1962, attended by a group of delegates representing about 15 orchestras, calling itself the **International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)**. This meeting was followed by others, with more orchestras enthusiastically joining in. AFM response to ICSOM was immediately hostile. “There were accusations of dual unionism and threats to ‘crush you like ants.’”³ After seriously considering leaving the AFM, ICSOM instead decided to reform the union from within and became the first players’ conference of the AFM in January 1969. Since that time, life in American orchestras has improved dramatically, 19 orchestras now having 52-week seasons and dozens providing a respectable living wage.

The symphony musicians’ incredible success in improving their wages became a liability to them, however, in their relationship with the union. In the early days of the AFM, the theatre and vaudeville musicians were the cash cows of the union, being the best-paid contingent of working musicians in the Federation and bringing in the lion’s share of the work dues. By mid-century the recording musicians had taken over that role, and by 1980, symphony musicians had joined the ranks of the relatively well-to-do among union musicians. Both the Federation and the locals, suffering shrinking memberships and loss of work to technology and nonunion labor, looked to symphony musicians for a bigger chunk of revenue to cover the union’s expenses. In 1980 the AFM Convention assessed a new 1% work dues, to be levied only on symphony musicians,

(DISSONANCE continued from page 5)

half going to the Federation and the other half staying with the locals.

Orchestra musicians complained that it was unfair for them to be expected to shoulder a disproportionate share of the union's financial burden—in effect, to be punished for being successful trade unionists—without being provided at least basic union services in return. A Houston Symphony member pointed out, “In Houston, symphony musicians comprise less than 1% of the union membership, yet our work dues provide an average of 20% of work dues collected.” The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra said, “This vote to force a minority of working symphonic musicians to pay a new tax at the Federation level and an even larger share at the local level is redolent of ‘taxation without representation.’ Every classical musician must view this action as a beginning of a serious rupture in inter-union relationships.”⁵

In 1989 a plan was worked out by the AFM and the players conferences, with the guidance of respected union consultant Bill Roehl, to provide needed union services to symphony and recording musicians in return for their greater financial investment in the union, but the plan was never fully implemented. [An update on the Roehl Report and “Blue Ribbon” Committee, which will describe the current discontent that has lead ICSOM and the other players conferences to this summer’s Unity Conference, will appear in the next issue of *Senza Sordino*.]

Seattle

Symphony musicians, like recording musicians, have rebelled against the AFM and its locals in various ways at various times, from the 1960’s lawsuits in Cleveland to the dues strike last year in Louisville [See “Rhapsody in Bluegrass, Part III,” *Senza Sordino*, January 1998.] All of these rebellions stopped just short of actually severing the ties that bind—except in 1988 in Seattle.

Dual unionism among professional musicians lives now in Seattle, a painful reminder that dissension in the AFM is not just a relic of our ancient past. An open wound on the dysfunctional body of the AFM is the **International Guild of Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Musicians (IGSOBM)**, the union of the Seattle Symphony. In 1988 the Seattle Symphony musicians threw off what they perceived to be oppressive AFM rules and an unresponsive Seattle local and took their unionism into their own hands.

This brings us to the state of restive dialogue with the AFM in which ICSOM and the other players conferences now find themselves. The next setting for union democracy in the AFM will be the Unity Conference, August 19-23, 1998, in Las Vegas. History is waiting for us there.

Marsha Schweitzer
Editor, *Senza Sordino*

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3. *Music Matters: The Performer and the American Federation of Musicians*, George Seltzer, 1989
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6. *Senza Sordino*, Vol XXVII, No. 1, October 1988



I felt compelled to comment on the lead story by Mary Carroll Plaine in the March, 1998, issue of *Senza Sordino* that arrived yesterday. While the participants that spent several days at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies were uplifted by their experience, I could not help but wonder about one aspect of their experience that left me cold. Apparently, there has been so much bashing of their organizations and leadership by participants there that the Center put new rules in place to stifle the dissent. To me, it shows the depths to which the American labor establishment has sunk.

How can a democratic and free labor movement flourish in such an environment? Without free speech and the right to dissent, there can be no real democracy or progress! Obviously, there is much to grouse about in today’s labor movement establishment, and that certainly includes the AFM. Isn’t it time that America’s symphony musicians stop subjecting themselves to the anachronism that the AFM has become, and file for a divorce on the basis of irreconcilable differences? What is appropriate for thoroughly disenfranchised domestic partners is certainly apropos for musicians and their so-called “union.” There is, and has been, nothing that the AFM can do for musicians that they cannot do better, and less expensively, for themselves, in their own new and independent labor organization. It’s time to wake up! The new millennium is almost upon us. The masochism must stop.

Sam Denov
Chicago Symphony Orchestra (retired)
Former ICSOM Chair

Mary Plaine replies: The emphasis at Meany is on teaching participants what constitutes a good union and how members can create one, not bashing one's union if one feels it is not representing its members properly. While conference attendees are asked to refrain from speaking harshly about their unions when in class, what they do outside of those classes is up to them.

“Voicings” graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster (bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)

Milwaukee Ballet and Milwaukee Symphony Conclude Collaborative Discussions

“The Milwaukee Ballet Company and Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) announced jointly that they concluded discussions on a possible collaborative effort between the two organizations. Under discussion was a proposal for the MSO to provide orchestral accompaniment and other music services to the Ballet. After careful consideration and a thorough investigation, it has been determined that such a collaboration would not be in the best interest of both organizations at this time.

“The proposed arrangement was viewed as an opportunity to strengthen both the artistic and administrative resources of each organization,” said Christine Harris, executive director of the Ballet. “After a thorough analysis, it has become clear that such a collaboration could restrict the options of both organizations to select whatever operational means are necessary to ensure financial stability.”

“While this particular opportunity is not right for the Ballet and the Symphony at this time, our discussions have served to open a dialogue between both organizations about other artistic and administrative partnerships,” said Steven A. Ovitsky, vice president and executive director of the MSO. In February, both organizations publicly announced that they were exploring the collaboration in answer to a call from community leadership. Both the Greater Milwaukee Committee and the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) have encouraged arts organizations to explore artistic and administrative partnerships to strengthen the arts community as a whole.

“As we have stated before, UPAF supports collaborative efforts that serve the best interests of the arts community, particularly long-term survival of our major groups. If the organizational, particularly financial, stability of both the Milwaukee Ballet and Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra cannot be strengthened by this collaboration, then we recognize that the community would not benefit from such a direction,” said Vince Martin, UPAF chairperson.

“While we are disappointed that a collaboration could not be arranged at this time, both the Ballet and MSO remain committed to exploring other avenues for achieving greater operational efficiency,” said Jodi Peck, chairperson of the Milwaukee Ballet board. The Milwaukee Ballet will continue to negotiate with the current Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra, whose contract expires June 30, 1998.”

[taken from a joint press release by the managements of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Milwaukee Ballet]

Tom Strini, in an editorial for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, sheds more light on the reasons for the decision to pull back from the proposed collaboration: “If the Milwaukee Ballet were committed to being a classical company, the collaboration would have come about, because classical ballets always require an orchestra. The Milwaukee Ballet of the future, however, is an unknown quantity. Harris, board President Jodi Peck, artistic director Basil

JAMES PETRILLO: Leader of the Ban

*by James Clute
Bassist, Minnesota Orchestra
ICSOM Member-At-Large*

About eleven years ago the Minnesota Orchestra was joined by the orchestra of Göteborg, Sweden, for a performance of Gustav Mahler's “Symphony of a Thousand.” Each American had a Swedish stand partner; mine was a young man, about my age, who had spent the early years of his career playing in bands on Swedish cruise ships in the Caribbean. My partner told me of an incident which had occurred on one of the cruises: The band members noticed that an elderly gentleman sat near them every evening and appeared to enjoy the music greatly. As they became acquainted with the gentleman, they discovered that he was the retired president of the American Federation of Musicians, James C. Petrillo. Of the tales he told them, the ones that remained in their memories were of the great difficulties and actual dangers in being a labor leader in the 1940's and '50's. To prove his point, he showed them that he still carried a revolver. (When I told this story to Ed Ward, the current president of Local 10-208 in Chicago, he wasn't surprised—his office, designed by Petrillo when Petrillo was president of the local, features many bullet-proofing design characteristics.)

In Jon Burlingame's 1997 book *For the Record*, which is a history of America's recording musicians, he writes: “More than one musician reported seeing Petrillo settle disputes by pulling out a concealed gun and placing it carefully on the table before him.” Screaming and table pounding were also in Petrillo's negotiating repertoire. Petrillo was a typical “tough” labor leader, yet there was never any proof of dishonesty or corruption attached to him. Gifts from the membership, yes; dishonesty, no.

James Caesar Petrillo was born on Chicago's West Side in 1892, the son of an Italian immigrant. Achieving the level of fourth grade after nine years of trying, he quit school and ended his formal education. He delivered newspapers and played trumpet in the *Daily News* band. He soon was playing trumpet in his own band. “Loud

(continued on next page)

Thompson and other leaders at the company are rethinking its very nature. They are trying to find a way to make the \$4.2 million company more exciting and appealing at the same time they are making it cheaper to run. With the exception of the extravagant new *Nutcracker* coming in December, we are likely to see more modern repertoire. Newer dances typically call for less in the way of sets, costumes and musical resources than the big classics demand.

“Any agreement with the MSO would have limited the ballet's options, because MBC would have had to pay for a big orchestra whether or not its new, yet-to-be-formulated artistic identity needs it or not. A pick-up band like the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra gives the ballet the concert-to-concert flexibility it needs during a transitional period, when it may need a big orchestra, a mixed chamber ensemble and no orchestra at all on successive programs.”

(PETRILLO continued from page 7)

and lousy” was his own description of his trumpet playing. In his early twenties, he became a union leader. Within a few years he rose to the vice-presidency and soon the presidency of Local 10.

Having entered the field when almost all music came from live performances, he devoted his career to creating live music, protecting opportunities for musicians, and restricting electronic reproduction. Petrillo's first battles as Local 10 president were against the Chicago radio stations which were taking work away from union musicians. When he was appointed to the Chicago Park Board, he convinced the board to create the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra. He also pioneered the “standby” system: If a non-local musician played in a Chicago theater, a local musician had to be paid to “stand by.”

Throughout his forty-year career in representational work, he would continue to fight automation in its various forms. His efforts in restricting recordings and broadcasts were legendary. In 1936 he forbade Chicago musicians from making recordings for use in broadcasting. Petrillo saw to it that no high school band played where a union band might. This led to the cancellation, on one day's notice, of a national radio broadcast of the National Music Camp Orchestra from Interlochen, Michigan.

Petrillo caused a ban on all recordings by union musicians in 1942-44 and again in 1948. These bans were lifted when the recording industry signed contracts which created free concerts in all AFM locals, financed by royalties from record sales. Petrillo felt this Music Performance Trust Fund was his finest moment, and it became the key to his political strength.

Petrillo was elected to the presidency of the AFM in 1940, holding the position until his resignation in 1958. He was distinctly a “populist” in his approach to union leadership. His ideals were that a union should do what was best for the majority, even to the point of “spreading the work around.” With the creation of the MPTF, Petrillo's ideals came into direct conflict with the principle that an individual worker should be able to retain the bulk of his earnings. The manifestation of this conflict came in 1958 when, during a several-months-long strike in Los Angeles against the movie producers, a rival union was formed—The Musicians Guild of America.

There were many causes leading to the formation of the Guild. In 1951, Petrillo had continued his war against recorded music by negotiating an agreement with the four major networks requiring that five percent of the budget for the recording of a television show must be paid to the AFM. Within four years this 5% “tax” had caused 80% of filmed TV scores to be recorded overseas, producing a large loss of income to Los Angeles musicians.

Prior to 1955, every musician who had worked on a film sold to TV received a one-time payment of \$25. In June of 1955, Petrillo and the International Executive Board directed the motion picture industry to make these payments to the MPTF instead of the individual musicians. The LA musicians lost \$2.5 million in nine months.

Furthermore, Petrillo and the IEB took a 10% wage hike that had been negotiated for the musicians in the Phonograph Record

Agreement, the first such increase in eight years, and diverted it into the MPTF. These unilateral directives were possible because Article 1, Section 1 of the Federation bylaws essentially gave the AFM President the right to issue any directives he wished. In addition to this loss of income, the Local 47 musicians had no royalties, no pension, and no contract ratification.

In September 1955, the members of Local 47 voted to protest the transfer of funds from them to the MPTF. A committee from Local 47 appealed to Petrillo and the IEB to change their policies and were refused. Shortly thereafter, at a general meeting of Local 47 members, the Local officers who supported Petrillo were voted out of office, and leaders of the dissenting group were voted in as the new officers. Within a few months thirteen of the rebel leaders were brought to trial by Petrillo and were expelled from the AFM.

In June 1956 the AFM convention upheld the expulsion of the rebel group. Petrillo was able to control the convention votes by rules which allowed the small locals to dominate the large locals. The 650 locals each had approximately the same number of delegates, so in voice votes the “lung power” went to the small locals. In the election of Federation officers and board members, the sliding scale of vote allotment meant that the larger the local, the smaller its proportion of votes. (Even today, Local 30-73 in Minnesota with approximately 1800 members has 18 votes, yet Local 802 in New York with 10,800 members has only 20 votes.)

As the AFM was negotiating an employment agreement with the Los Angeles movie producers affecting Local 47 musicians, an impasse was reached which led to a strike by the musicians beginning in February of 1958.

In March 1958, the dissenting Los Angeles musicians formed The Musicians Guild of America. This provoked incredible turmoil throughout the entire AFM because the specter of dual unionism was now a reality. One of dual unionism's first victims was James C. Petrillo, who relinquished the presidency of the AFM later that year, although he remained president of Local 10 in Chicago. He was replaced as AFM president by Herman D. Kenin.

In July 1958 the Guild won a National Labor Relations Board election giving them the right to negotiate with the major film studios. The Guild quickly negotiated an end to the 20-week strike. This settlement ended the 5% tax, and within two years the recordings from overseas were nearly eliminated. Also of importance, musicians now were allowed to ratify their own contracts for the first time.

Two years later, the Guild's right to negotiate with the film industry was defeated in another NLRB election. To an extent, this defeat was caused by a change in attitude by the Federation. The Federation had recently voted the infamous and dictatorial Article 1, Section 1 out of its bylaws. Federation action also returned to the musicians the pay increases which had been diverted to the MPTF.

In 1962 the AFM and the Guild concluded negotiations allotting half of the money which had been going to the MPTF into a new Special Payments Fund which would send that money back to the musicians who made the recordings. In the same 1962 negotiations, the AFM granted the recording musicians the right to ratify

their contracts. After winning these concessions from the AFM, the Guild dissolved itself, and its members were permitted back into the AFM. (Later in the same year, the formation of ICSOM began with its main goal being the right of symphonic musicians to ratify their own contracts.)

The final chapter in the long story of Petrillo's strong influence within the musicians union came in the December 4, 1962 presidential election in Local 10. A group of dissidents, mostly Chicago Symphony Orchestra members, had filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB. Their complaints regarded Petrillo's restriction of their right to take jobs outside the symphony, and his refusal to permit the symphony's elected orchestra committee to sit at the bargaining table. This small group campaigned hard against a complacent Petrillo, beating him by a very narrow margin. After his election defeat in Chicago, the AFM gave him a comfortable pension and advisor's salary, but his influence had ended.

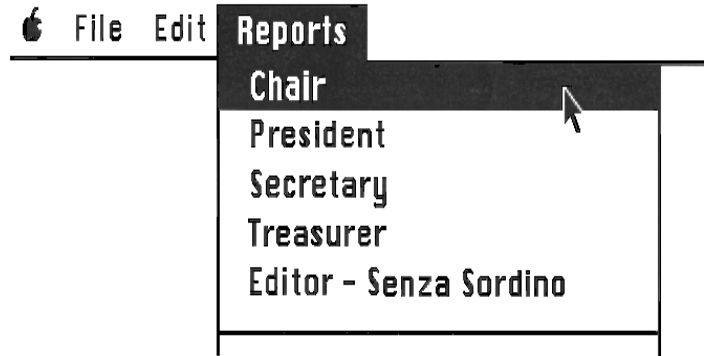
James Caesar Petrillo died on October 23, 1984 at the age of 92. He was possibly the best-known labor leader in mid-20th-century America. His recording bans, his tangle with the National Music Camp, his troubles with the Guild, to mention a few of his notable battles, gave him nearly instant name recognition in most American families. His national recognition was usually not positive; he even defied Franklin D. Roosevelt in his wartime recording ban. Indeed, some of his actions may have led in part to the enactment of tougher national labor laws. But he was a hero to most of his constituents.

Coming from a background of "loud and lousy" at a time when automated music was no threat, it is no wonder that he fought musicians who recorded music or made a substantial wage from it, and referred to them as elitists (or worse). He was a fighter for the little guy as long as the little guy was performing live music. He was mentioned in a 1940 article in the periodical *Current Biography* as increasing pit orchestra musicians pay from \$12.00 to \$99.00 per week, and creating sick leave and widow benefits.

His methods of controlling votes at the annual convention showed political genius, and standing up to nearly unanimous public opinion against him demonstrated remarkable bravery. He was a leader that time passed by, but the legacy of his policies remains.

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The Missing Pieces in Mellon's Puzzle

The Orchestra Forum, a project of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, recently concluded a series of meetings for the purpose of "structured dialog around issues of current importance to the future of the orchestra field," with a goal of shaping "a new national program of strategic support for American orchestras." The Mellon Foundation invited ten professional orchestras (nine American and one English) to participate in the Forum. The orchestras sent representatives to the meetings from their boards, staffs, and conducting staffs, as well as some musicians (some of whom were chosen by their managements, not by their colleagues, to attend.)

The Mellon Foundation chose to exclude any of the institutions in the field that represented musicians or boards, including the American Symphony Orchestra League, ICSOM, ROPA, or the AFM—an interesting decision, considering that the initial invitation to orchestras to apply for participation included questions about the role of national service organizations in "pushing the field in new directions" and whether the "Union" could be a "positive force" in achieving higher levels of job satisfaction for musicians. One would have thought that the ASOL and the AFM (not to mention the orchestra musicians' own conferences) might have had something useful to add to the discussion of those questions.

But the Mellon Foundation did invite one union to participate in the Orchestra Forum. Unfortunately, it was the union that represents British orchestra musicians, not the one that represents the musicians that play in American orchestras.

The ICSOM chairperson eagerly awaits his invitation to participate in the efforts of a major English foundation (any one will do) to make an impact on the English orchestral scene. He expects to wait for a long time, however.

Robert Levine
ICSOM Chair

Book Review:

Aching Bodies and Broken Embouchures

The Athletic Musician:

A Guide to Playing Without Pain

by Barbara Paull and Christine Harrison

192 pages \$27.00 paperback

Scarecrow Press

Since the 1980's, when official interest in musicians' playing injuries peaked within the medical establishment, there have been several books and articles written on the subject. *The Athletic Musician, A Guide to Playing Without Pain*, written by physical therapist Barbara Paull and violinist Christine Harrison, is one more book which deals with the various complex and difficult physical problems plaguing musicians. As is the case with other such books on musicians' aches and pains, *The Athletic Musician* is filled with a wealth of information on preventing and dealing with general playing injuries but is absent any information on the soft palette injuries in woodwind players, swelling or abrasions of the lip, or the stretching or tearing of the lip muscle in brass players.

However, *The Athletic Musician* is a well-written book which offers sound advice on playing posture, how to hold, carry, and adjust an instrument ergonomically to make it more comfortable and healthy to play. It contains a very easy-to-understand primer in body mechanics and anatomy and describes stretching and strengthening techniques specifically designed for the back, neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, hands, and fingers. As well, it includes a thoughtful discussion of the psychology of dealing with a playing injury.

A few years ago, ICSOM published one of the best handbooks written for musicians on the subject of playing injuries, *The Musician's Survival Manual*, written by Dr. Richard Norris and edited by former *Senza* editor Deborah Torch (available from MMB Music, phone 1-800-543-3771). Like *The Athletic Musician*, it is a wonderful source of prevention and treatment information. Neither of these two books can replace common sense, though. It doesn't take a medical manual to figure out that playing injuries, including embouchure injuries, are caused by overuse—from musicians engaging in playing activities too many hours every day.

Musicians are taught from an early age that the more they play, the better or stronger their playing will become. But that is only true if the muscle systems which control a player's playing are allowed to recover from the ever-increasing physical and professional stresses expected of them. The rehearsal and performance schedules of most symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras are grueling, to say the least. Adding to this institutional load is a player's private teaching, recordings, chamber music, and other self-imposed extracurricular musical activities, all of which make it impossible for a player to get the proper amount of physical rest, practice time, and time away from the instrument.

Chronically fatigued muscles cannot sustain the kind of daily physical and artistic demands musicians place upon them. When a player's playing mechanics are compromised by fatigue long enough, they soon become replaced with a more strained, stress-filled mechanical system. It is no wonder that many players eventually find themselves battling physical problems. Unfortunately, while most of us are intellectually aware of the cumulative effects heavy playing schedules have on our physical health and playing, we have done little to address the problem institutionally.

If there is any long-term answer, it is prevention. Dr. Emil Pascarelli, a New York City specialist in occupational and music medicine, would like to see anatomy and body mechanics taught in music schools so that musicians can learn how things work and how to avoid injuring themselves, how much stress their muscles can take, when to let their muscles rest, and how to strengthen their muscles properly.

The Athletic Musician is an excellent resource for developing a safe and sound physical approach to playing and is available through your local bookstore.

*Lucinda-Lewis
hornist, New Jersey Symphony
ICSOM Secretary*

Lucinda-Lewis has been doing research for the last three years for an upcoming book on injuries and medical/dental problems affecting brass players. She has also published several articles in brass players' magazines throughout the world on embouchure problems.

(KANSAS CITY JOINS ICSOM continued from page 1)

****Peer Group Benchmark** – The base annual salary, title pay and pension contribution paid to the musicians will be increased to an amount not less than the average annual salary and title pay percentage of a peer group of orchestras. Best efforts will be made to provide annual salary and title pay in excess of the peer group average. It is the goal of the Kansas City Symphony to substantially increase pension contributions, establish a seniority pay plan, increase per diem expense pay, and to reduce employee contributions to health insurance to levels commensurate with those of the peer group. The peer group will consist of eight orchestras which

participate in both the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) and the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL) selected at the time of each negotiation based upon their annual operating budgets for the then current season, with the Kansas City Symphony's budget as the median. The average annual base salary of the eight orchestras, the average title pay percentage, and the average annual pension contribution percentage of those eight orchestras will become the benchmarks for negotiations between the Symphony and its Musicians."

[The Kansas City Symphony Orchestra Committee will write a follow-up article in the next Senza Sordino to explain their new contract in more detail. – ed.]

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Glen Morley was a cellist and librarian with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra from 1947 to 1955. His life in the orchestra inspired a series of sketches which he titled "Symphoniphobias," of which this is one, titled "Triangle." (submitted by Morris Secon, Rochester Philharmonic hornist, retired.)

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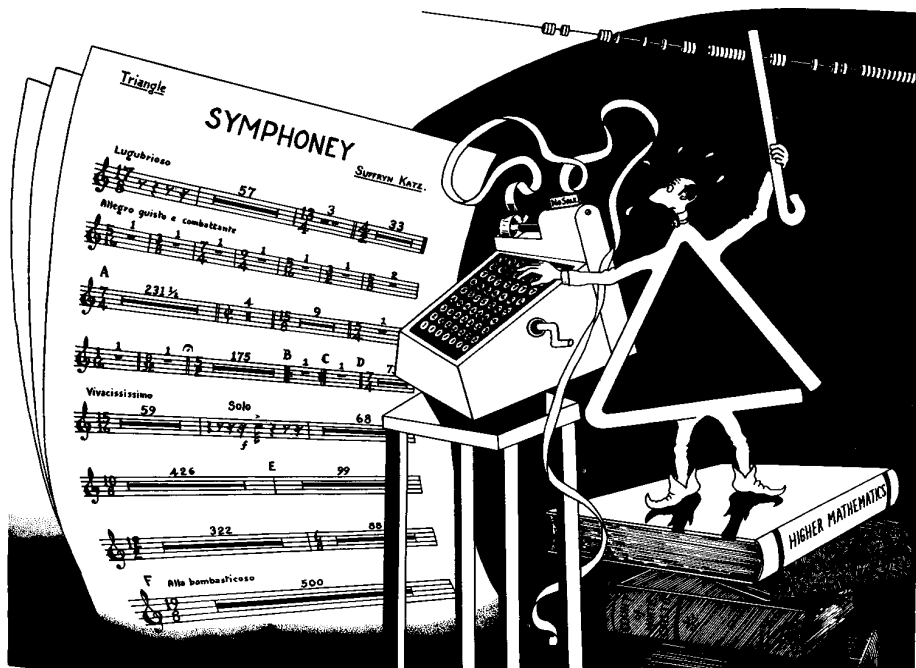
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Glen Morley

Newslets

The Musician's Survival Manual by Dr. Richard Norris has been translated into Croatian and is now being used by musicians in Croatia. In a letter to Dr. Norris, Zvonimir Stanislav of the Croatian Association of Orchestral & Chamber Musicians writes, "Late last year an Arts Medicine Center for performing artists was established within the Dubrava Clinical Hospital in Zagreb, a center similar to those around the world. It was founded on the initiative of the Croatian Performers' Collecting Society, in collaboration with various artists' associations (Croatian Association of Orchestral & Chamber Musicians, Croatian Musicians' Union, Croatian Society of Music Artists). The Center has already conducted extensive medical examinations and tests with members of the Zagreb Philharmonic, while other Croatian orchestras are soon to visit the Center as well."



ICSOM Member-at-Large Michael Moore and Nathan Kahn of the AFM Symphonic Services Division are working on solutions to the recent problems incurred by musicians **bringing musical instruments onto commercial aircraft as carry-on baggage**. New regulations being established by the airlines are making the transportation of instruments increasingly difficult. If you have experienced instrument carry-on problems recently, Nathan and Michael would like to hear about it. Michael can be reached at the addresses below, and Nathan at (719) 520-3288 or NathanKahn@aol.com.

This year's **ICSOM Scholars** have been selected, in collaboration with the American Symphony Orchestra League's Music Assistance Fund. The ICSOM Memorial Awards provide scholarships to minority music students chosen in competitive auditions. Congratulations to the winners:

<i>Kazem Abdullah</i>	<i>clarinet</i>	<i>Cincinnati Conservatory</i>
<i>David Davis</i>	<i>viola</i>	<i>Roosevelt University</i>
<i>Robert Davis</i>	<i>clarinet</i>	<i>Cleveland Institute</i>
<i>Mariana Green</i>	<i>violin</i>	<i>Juilliard School</i>
<i>Kyle Lombard</i>	<i>violin</i>	<i>Yale University</i>
<i>Richmond Punch</i>	<i>viola</i>	<i>Juilliard School</i>
<i>Jennifer Snyder</i>	<i>viola</i>	<i>Juilliard School</i>
<i>Tahirah Whittington</i>	<i>cello</i>	<i>[undecided]</i>



Several ICSOM orchestras have inquired about the American Federation of Musicians and Employers' Pension Fund rules **restricting working in covered employment while collecting early retirement benefits (before age 65)**. The new rules were instituted to bring the pension fund into conformity with Federal regulations. More information will be forthcoming from the AFM-EPPF in their summer newsletter.

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Florida Orchestra
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Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

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Kansas City Symphony
Kennedy Center Orchestra
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Louisville Orchestra
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
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Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 36, NO. 4

July 1998

Toward Unity 1998:

Roehl Rapture, Blue Ribbon Blues

In the May 1998 Senza Sordino we began a study of the history of dissent and union democracy in the AFM, culminating with the new crescendo of unrest that had begun with the rise of symphony and recording musicians as a force within the union. The imposition in 1980 of Federation work dues on virtually all working musicians in the AFM (not just on symphony musicians, correcting an error in the last issue of Senza) provoked a new estrangement between working musicians and the AFM leadership, and impelled a search for justice by the musicians so taxed—a search that is chronicled in this issue of Senza.

Dissonance To Consonance: Roehl Report Seeks Resolution

At the 1985 ICSOM Conference and again at a 1986 Symposium in Chicago, then-AFM President Victor Fuentealba acknowledged the unfairness of Federation work dues as then structured, admitting that symphony musicians were paying a disproportionate share of work dues, and recognizing that a concomitant level of service to working musicians needed to be forthcoming from both the locals and the Federation.

In 1987, under pressure from ICSOM, President Fuentealba established a “work dues study committee” to look into possible revisions to the union’s work dues structure. This committee recommended no work dues reforms, and symphony musicians got no relief. It did, however, propose that Federation bylaws be amended to “outline the locals’ responsibility to represent members of all collective bargaining units,” including requiring a local “to provide, at its own expense, competent, professional representation for contract negotiations and the processing of grievances and arbitrations.” But the question of what would happen if the locals failed to comply with this requirement was never answered. Then-ICSOM Chair Melanie Burrell wrote in the April 1987 issue of *Senza Sordino*:

Clearly, the IEB was not willing to guarantee immediate representation if a local would need to borrow money from the Federation for that purpose, nor was the IEB willing to ensure that orchestra musicians would not have to pay **again** [over and above work dues already paid] for the right of representation.

This amendment to the bylaws was adopted by the 1987 AFM Convention and expanded by the 1989 Convention, but the underlying issues of excessive work dues and insufficient union service remained basically unaddressed.

(continued on page 5)

Promise Breakers: The Unraveling of Blue Ribbon

Ah, summer is in the air, and the young activist’s thoughts turn to—restructure? Again? Haven’t we done this before?

Indeed we have, and not so long ago, either. By the late 1980’s it was clear to all that the AFM was heading for the rocks. Not only was the union spending, every year, between 14% and 22% more money than it was bringing in, but the AFM was still reeling from the 1988 decision of the Seattle Symphony musicians to do the unthinkable—decertify the AFM and form their own union. There was widespread discontent within the symphonic and recording communities about the level of work dues they paid and the quality of services they received in exchange, while the union’s reserves were dwindling rapidly. In short, the AFM was virtually bankrupt, and in imminent danger of losing precisely those musicians who could bail it out.

In 1991, then-AFM President J. Martin Emerson, citing the fact that “our Union [was] headed for certain bankruptcy,” put together the Blue Ribbon Committee. This group, headed by then-Vice President from Canada J. Alan Wood, put forward a report which was unanimously adopted by the so-called “Full Deliberative Committee,” consisting of Blue Ribbon plus the Small Locals Committee, a newly-formed Large Locals Committee, and an Advisory and Research Committee consisting of AFM staff. This report consisted of four parts, three of which were presented in bylaw form to the 1991 AFM convention. Most of the bylaws recommendations were passed by the convention and went into effect.

Did it work? Why did the AFM once again find itself out of money last year and with so many of its members in a state of continued discontent?

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New “Evergreen” Era In Kansas City

The first years of the Kansas City Symphony might have been very different if our community had not suffered through the wreckage of the Kansas City Philharmonic, which folded at the conclusion of the 1981-82 season. The years of strikes, cancellations, large accumulated deficits, and the plethora of bad press with an anti-union slant, remained indelibly etched in the memories of the community, its leaders, and especially, the musicians.

Immediately following this turmoil, a grateful group of musicians accepted individual contracts to perform in a temporary, interim orchestra organized late in the fall of 1982. The first season of the Kansas City Symphony was made possible by a very generous one-million-dollar gift from R. Crosby Kemper. Subsequent seasons continued through the efforts of a small and dedicated group of board members committed to finishing each season with a balanced budget. Over the years those individuals have contributed large sums of money to cover the annual budgets of the Symphony.

It soon became evident that the Symphony would permanently replace the Philharmonic. The musicians, all members of the AFM and Local 34-627, began to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement. These efforts led to periodic negotiations with the Symphony management and an agreement titled “Personnel Policies.” This document contained fairly standard contract language but lacked union recognition. That issue, although consistently addressed in negotiations, was never completely resolved because the continued financial support of the orchestra remained in serious question and our musicians feared for the orchestra’s future.

Strategic Planning

In 1995 a change in management and board leadership led to a gradual change in communication style within the Symphony. A more active board and more open dialogue and interaction among management, musicians and the board led to a new level of trust and respect within the organization.

During the 1996-97 season the board initiated a strategic long-range planning process. Facilitated by the Wolf Organization, this process brought about the first extensive, frank, and open discussions of all aspects of the Kansas City Symphony—including promotion of artistic excellence and the development of educational, financial, and human resources. Several musicians served on the board’s long-range planning committee and two musicians served on each of five subgroups, together with board members and community leaders. The key to future union recognition discussions came from the “Human Resources” subgroup. A recommendation was adopted to schedule ongoing discussions of the union recognition question through a joint task force of musicians, management and board members. Those subgroup meetings produced a comprehensive Strategic Plan which the board adopted at the end of the 1996-97 season.

The Agreement

As the 1997-98 season began the Musicians’ Committee conducted a survey of the musicians. The results of this survey

mandated the pursuit of a collective bargaining agreement containing union recognition language. The Committee met frequently to prepare for the coming negotiations and requested that management appoint the recommended task force to discuss the union recognition question. The Committee also searched for the most effective legal counsel available and engaged attorney Susan Martin of Martin & Bonnett. The board of Local 34-627 granted our request for financial assistance without delay.

On November 12, 1997, Susan Martin was introduced at an orchestra meeting to formally organize our efforts to obtain union recognition. An overwhelming majority of the orchestra musicians were present at the meeting and they unanimously signed authorization cards appointing Local 34-627 as their sole collective bargaining agent. This confirmed the survey results obtained in September. Later that day Susan Martin and Musicians’ Committee members Dave Everson and Brian Rood met with Executive Director Roland Valliere and one board member to present our request for voluntary union recognition as a requirement for proceeding with negotiations.

Several deadlines we established came and went during December as Susan Martin, the Committee and the Symphony discussed different approaches to the issue. It was during this time that we jointly agreed to follow the recommendation of the Strategic Plan to appoint a task force to address union recognition. Our five Musicians’ Committee members, five board members, and the executive director met for two comprehensive all-day sessions with extensive phone calls, email, and conference calls taking place between meetings. At the conclusion of the task force meetings in late January, the executive board adopted the task force report containing a recommendation to grant voluntary union recognition. The task force also recommended the negotiation of a nine-year agreement with economic provisions negotiated in three-year increments and non-economic issues opened annually as mutually agreed. During these meetings we became aware of how important a nine-year agreement was to the board. A new performing arts center is in the planning stage—a top priority for the Symphony—and both parties wish to insure that the Symphony will perform for many years to come.

As the task force concluded its work, an exhaustive schedule of negotiation meetings began under the guidance of our attorney, Susan Martin, with the full participation of the Musicians’ Committee and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Albrecht of Local 34-627. Negotiations were virtually complete by early March with the pension vehicle determined during meetings in April. These meetings included local pension experts and Linda Scala of the AFM & EP Fund. The musicians ratified the agreement on April 30, 1998, following unanimous approval by the board.

Evergreen Provisions

The term “evergreen” describes our agreement’s ongoing negotiation process with the goal of achieving peaceful and fair contract extension and renewal. Our process, based on benchmarking and a schedule for future negotiations, was developed by the

negotiating teams with the leadership and guidance of legal counsel, based partly on a study of modern labor negotiation trends and practices.

The goal to reach a nine-year agreement which would establish economic terms for the first three years only became possible by benchmarking key economic issues—salary, title pay, and pension contribution—as a means of determining those issues for the later seasons. Statistics will be used from a “peer group” of eight orchestras that will be chosen based on their current annual operating budgets. The group will include four orchestras with annual budgets above and four orchestras with annual budgets below that of the Kansas City Symphony. All eight of the peer group orchestras must be members of both ICSOM & the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL). The benchmarks will be the averages of the minimum annual salary, title pay, and pension contribution of these eight orchestras. The board’s stated goal is to exceed the salary and title pay benchmarks. In addition, the board intends to make significant progress in meeting the pension contribution, seniority pay, per diem, and employee health insurance contributions goals in the same manner.

We have established a schedule for future negotiations to help reach timely agreements. Negotiations are scheduled to begin in January of the year prior to the year that the economic provisions expire. This will occur for the first time in the second year of the agreement (1999-2000). There are provisions for employing a fact-finder, mediator, or arbitrator. If by May 1 of a negotiation year there is no agreement, the mediator or fact-finder will be asked to issue a written report on the three benchmarks, and to report whether the Symphony’s offer meets the benchmarks and makes progress toward meeting the other stated economic goals *without resulting in a reduction of annual salary, title pay or pension contribution.*

If the report favors the Symphony, their offer will be adopted. If not, and the Symphony does not increase their offer to meet the established goals, an arbitrator will determine whether the Symphony is financially able to meet the benchmarks. If the Symphony is deemed to be financially able, but does not increase its offer to meet the benchmarks, then the Union may reopen the entire agreement. If the Symphony is deemed to be financially unable, their offer may be adopted. Flexibility is a feature of our agreement. One or two years of a three-year period may be below these benchmarks, provided the remaining year(s) raise the three-year averages to those of the peer group benchmarks.

When an agreement is reached on schedule before a written report is issued, there is an automatic extension of the agreement for three additional years. If agreement is reached later, the extension may occur by mutual agreement. Hence the description “evergreen.”

The process of benchmarking and the agreement renewal schedule balance the board’s commitment to reach competitive economic levels with our shared commitment to fiscal responsibility. The board’s adoption of the Strategic Plan in 1997 established policies that will lead to a gradual increase in annual operating budgets and therefore to a different, higher-budget peer group for each succes-

sive negotiation period. This process will continue to provide a competitive economic package for Kansas City Symphony musicians in future years.

The agreement also provides for three musicians to be voting members of the board (which has a current voting membership of eighteen members) and for four additional musicians to be members of standing board committees, the most important of which is the finance committee. Musicians have been members of the finance committee for the past three seasons. With a commitment to open and complete sharing of the current finances of the Symphony we expect to be fully informed of the Symphony’s financial condition.

The main economic terms established for the first three years of the agreement were arrived at by comparison with other orchestras but not by formal benchmarking. The first goal of the musicians and the board was to eliminate the three-tiered salary structure of the orchestra. This occurs by the end of the third year of the agreement (2000-01). Although very expensive, it underlines the board’s commitment to a first-class, full-time Kansas City Symphony. In addition, any other non-economic provision of the contract, (i.e. non-renewal procedure, audition procedure, etc.) can be reopened at any time by written agreement to address issues of concern.

The members of the negotiating team were Musicians’ Committee members Dave Everson (chair), Shannon Finney, Tim Jepson, Jacky Michell and Brian Rood. We were assisted by Richard Albrecht of AFM Local 34-627 and Susan Martin of Martin & Bonnett. Members of the Musicians’ Committee are deeply grateful to Susan Martin for her exceptional representation, to Richard Albrecht and the Board of Local 34-627 for their financial assistance, and to the musicians of the Kansas City Symphony for their courage, commitment, and support.

The Kansas City Symphony Musicians’ Committee



The new Kansas City contract provides these levels of salary, pension, and title pay for the first three years:

Full-time annual salary:

<i>C category*</i>	\$30,712	\$31,448	\$32,204
<i>B category*</i>	\$27,266	\$29,338	\$31,490
<i>A category*</i>	\$22,294	\$26,267	\$30,427

<i>Pension:</i>	3.5%	4%	5%
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Title pay:

<i>principal</i>	16%	17%	18%
<i>co- & associate principal</i>	8.5%	9.5%	10.5%
<i>assistant principal</i>	6%	7%	8%

** In the last half of the third season all musicians will be paid at the C category level.*

Editorial:

The Communist/Capitalist State of the Union

In the Spring issue of *The Denver Musician*, President of the Denver Musicians' Association Pete Vriesenga laid out two opposing views of union economics which could be interpreted as: 1) the **communist view**—a vision of all union musicians contributing to and drawing from the same well, from each according to his ability, to each according to his need; and 2) the **capitalist view**—

communism – an economic theory or system based on the ownership of all property by the community as a whole.

dollar-in-dollar-out, from each member in dues according to the cost of services purchased, to each member according to what

he pays for. Union “communists” would typically see all forms of union service as entitlements that come by virtue of union membership; union “capitalists” would more likely see union service as a commodity to be bought and sold, not necessarily a membership entitlement.

Unionism is certainly a socialist idea. Solidarity is built on the recognition that identification with and allegiance to the collective can only be expected if each individual feels respected and protected by the collective. Each member of the collective must be represented in some way during negotiations and in the resulting contract, his needs addressed and his opinions considered, if he is to be motivated to contribute to furthering the collective's goals. Keeping the collective strong during strikes and hard times depends on taking care of the weakest and most vulnerable among us. That safety net—the trust among all union members that each will support the other during good times and bad—is the bedrock of unionism.

capitalism – the economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution are privately owned and operated for profit, originally under fully competitive conditions.

As communal as unions are, however, there is also another side. Many taxes we pay to government and donations we make to charity go to help those less fortunate, as some say union dues should. But union dues are not quite the same. Unions are not charities, and union dues are not goodwill offerings like those we make to the church or the United Way, with no expectation of personal return. We take a *business* tax deduction, not a *charitable* one, for union dues because we expect to get a service related to our business in exchange for our dues. That's the capitalist part of unionism.

socialism – any of various theories or systems of the ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution by society or the community rather than by private individuals, with all members of society or the community sharing in the work and the products.

Capitalism can also foster a positive and powerful psychology among union members—the pride of ownership. Unions, like other businesses, benefit from their members' having a personal stake in the enterprise. Ownership breeds a greater depth of interest in the union, a greater sense of responsibility toward it, and a greater

involvement in day-to-day union activities. Union dues become more than payment for services rendered; they become investments, meant to strengthen the union as a whole and build a sound organization in which we and our fellow member-investors can place our confidence, and from which we can benefit for years to come.

Few of us would choose to line up all the way toward one side or the other of this economic dichotomy, and fortunately, we don't have to. Elements of communism and capitalism can and usually do coexist within the same economic system, and in the context of different forms of political/governmental structures. Union members, familiar with the art of negotiation, should be able to find accord with some blending of ideas between the two poles, realizing that unionism would fare best by incorporating the best of both systems.

democracy – government in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives; rule by the ruled.

But our differences are not just over communist vs. capitalist views of union economics. They are also about the political system in which our union operates. Although the AFM appears to be a representative democracy, there are two logjams in the union's democratic process that make it more like an oligarchy. The first is between the large and small locals, as a result of the weighted voting scheme at AFM Conventions, giving the members of small locals a disproportionately greater voice and vote at the Convention. The second is between the working members, who tend to be a minority in most locals, and the not-so-working members, who outnumber the working members and control most locals. In paying taxes to government or making donations to charity, the choice to levy the tax or make the donation is made by the taxpayers who pay the tax or the donor whose money is given. Union duespayers in a democratic union ought to have the same personal say in the dues assessments that affect them, but in the AFM they don't.

Working musicians suffer from a policy akin to gerrymandering—the political strategy of drawing voting district boundary lines so as to dilute the voting power of a minority and make it politically ineffective.

oligarchy – a form of government in which the ruling power belongs to a few persons.

Since the AFM geographic locals are the entities upon which AFM voting

representation is based, and since working musicians are a minority in most locals and the local AFM Convention delegates rarely vote their minority interest, the working musicians are effectively without representation in the AFM. Working musicians are more directly represented by the players conferences, but the players conferences do not vote at the Convention. Thus, the imposition of Federation work dues in 1980 on working musicians was a case of taxation without representation because those taxed had no real voice in the levying of the tax.

This kind of disenfranchisement causes, and has caused among symphony and recording musicians, precisely the kind of estrangement and marginalization that most seriously threatens our basic union solidarity. When the AFM oligarchy imposed a tax on part

of the membership in the well-meaning attempt to prop up the other part—to advance the best of the communist side of unionism, you might say—it alienated the silenced minority and made impossible the very internal collective strength it sought.

Union reform allows for the wedding of the communist and capitalist aspects of unionism, acknowledging that an injury to one is an injury to all, and that solidarity depends on meeting the needs of each member, but also asserting that how and by whom those needs are met must be decided in a balanced and democratic way—one musician, one vote. You can't strengthen an organization by weakening the people in it. This applies to orchestras saving money by impoverishing their musicians, and to unions consolidating power in the hands of a few by tying the hands of others.

Definitions from *Webster's New World Dictionary*



(ROEHL REPORT: continued from page 1)

The 1987 ICSOM Conference adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of a "Summit Committee" composed of representatives of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, and RMA to discuss areas of common interest among these groups of active musicians, and work in concert to address these interests. Delegates to the 1987 ICSOM Conference also mandated "a committee to explore ways of more effective and cost-effective representation for orchestras within the AFM and local unions." This Structure Committee, composed of ICSOM delegates, reported back to the Conference in 1988. After exploring several options, such as orchestra-only locals and a national symphony-opera-ballet orchestra union, the Structure Committee concluded that the only change which might be practical and beneficial was the creation of a trade division, and in its report to the 1988 ICSOM conference it described how trade divisions work in other unions and recommended exploration of a trade division within the AFM. [See page 12 for an explanation of "trade division."]

Acting on the Structure Committee's findings, delegates to the 1988 Conference called upon ICSOM to establish a committee to prepare a working model of a symphony-opera-ballet orchestra trade division within the AFM, demonstrating governing structure, budget, services, and other features of such a trade division. The Trade Division Committee, composed of representatives of ICSOM, OCSM, ROPA, RMA, and the AFM, was subsequently formed and met in late 1988.

The Trade Division Committee's deliberations were summarized in written recommendations, prepared by Richard Totusek, for presentation to the IEB. The IEB accepted them and in turn incorporated them into proposals submitted to the AFM convention in 1989. Subsequently, AFM bylaws were amended in 1989 to establish player conference representation at the AFM Convention and to mandate increased services to orchestras by their local unions.

During its deliberations, the Trade Division Committee retained William Roehl, a union consultant and former assistant director of the AFL-CIO Organizing and Field Services Department, as an

advisor. Mr. Roehl met with the Trade Division Committee and with AFM officers, considered the documents provided by the committee, and following the 1989 AFM Convention, submitted a written report of his conclusions and recommendations to the IEB. The Roehl Report contained these recommendations:

- that the AFM symphony department be structurally formalized as the Symphonic Services Division (SSD);
- that the AFM Recording Department be similarly formalized as the Electronic Media Services Division (EMSD);
- that a Symphonic Steering Committee, consisting of the principal officers of ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA, be established to advise the SSD;
- that a similar Electronic Media Steering Committee, comprised of RMA representatives and one symphonic conference representative, be established to advise the EMSD;
- that the Summit Committee be renamed the Player Conference Council (PCC) and be institutionalized in the AFM structure;
- that the PCC meet with the IEB "to exchange information and ideas on appropriate subjects regarding the good and welfare of the AFM;" and
- that "the existing AFM Structure Committee shall continue its research into structural and operational improvements within the AFM, possibly including the submission of a detailed plan for a Trade Division."

The Roehl Report was adopted by the IEB on March 31, 1990. In the June-August 1990 issue of *Senza Sordino*, then-ICSOM Chair Brad Buckley summed up its promise:

The adoption of the Roehl Report by the IEB is a commitment to improve the services that the union provides for musicians in the four player conferences. It legitimizes the informal alliance formed by the conferences (the Player Conference Council) and provides formal access for the Council to the IEB. Further, it places a player conference advisory committee with each of the newly created Federation divisions (Symphonic and Electronic Media). If the IEB and the administrators of the divisions act on the advice and programs recommended by the player conferences, we will see improved services and a Federation that is responsive to our needs.

The essential Roehl recommendations were implemented, the most important being the establishment of formal relationships between the player conferences and their respective AFM divisions, as well as with the IEB. But have we seen "improved services and a Federation that is responsive to our needs?" The changes recommended by the Roehl Report were easily accepted because they didn't cost the AFM any money or force the IEB to relinquish any power. Roehl built bridges and opened new channels of communication, but did not remove the real impediments to the flow of ideas and action. Getting people with personal agendas and political pressures to respond to new information requires more than just improving organizational access.

Marsha Schweitzer
Editor, Senza Sordino

Simon



Once upon a time there lived a man named Simon who played a strange and wonderful musical instrument. The name of this musical instrument was bassoon. The man spent many hours of each day happily scraping little pieces of magic grasses called arundo donax. When he was satisfied that the little piece of arundo donax was vibrating at an acceptable frequency he would place it on the end pipe of the bassoon. By blowing through the magic arundo donax beautiful frequencies of tone would emanate from the interior of the musical instrument. Low tones. High tones. Sad and happy. All who heard the musical instrument called bassoon wondered at the magical sound it could produce.

One day, Simon decided to travel to a bigger town. He wanted to play the bassoon with other musical instruments. He traveled many, many days to this other town. In his travels he saw incredible sights. Things that he had never seen or even heard of before. When he approached the town of his destination he wondered at its size. Never, ever had he seen a town with so many people. The buildings were higher. The roads were wider. The stores were larger. When he stopped to ask directions he learned that the people were almost always in a terrible rush. Eventually, he found himself in front of a building with many columns. Tall windows. Marble staircases. This was the building he had been directed to by the local citizens. The other musical instruments he wished to play with were, he was assured, in this building. Carrying his bassoon he climbed the marble staircase to the splendid front door. When he knocked on this door many moments passed before the door finally swung open. When it did, a middle-aged man with a significant belly stood before him.

"Yeah?? Whaddaya want??" said the middle-aged man with the significant belly.

"I have traveled many long days from my town to play my bassoon with other musical instruments," said Simon.

"Musicians around back," said the middle-aged man with the significant belly as he slammed the door shut.

Simon walked down the marble steps and followed an alleyway that seemed to wind around to the rear of the building. When he had come to the back of the building he

noticed a door at the top of a very small number of stairs. He ascended the stairs and knocked on the rather plain looking door. He had to wait a very long time before he heard footsteps approaching the inside of the door. When finally it opened there stood a middle-aged man with a significant belly.

"Yeah?? Whaddaya want??" said the man.

"Haven't we met somewhere before?" asked Simon.

"I don't fraternize wit musicians!" said the man.

"I am here to play my bassoon with other musical instruments," said Simon.

"Ya got a union card?" said the middle-aged man.

"No sir. I'm afraid I don't know what you mean," said Simon.

"No union card no gig."

But at just this moment the middle-aged man with a significant belly was called from behind by another person. Even though the door was partially closed Simon could hear the agitation in the voices behind the door.

"Wadiamean the bassoon player didn't show up? We're playing Beethoven's Fourth Symphony. Whatthelhell we gonna do now?! Dumbasterd probably drunker'n a skunk somewhere's."

The voices became inaudible to Simon. Even though he couldn't hear voices he sensed that there were still people behind the door talking. After perhaps several more minutes the door opened again. This time a bit wider than it was before. The middle-aged man with the significant belly appeared as before in the doorway.

"Hey kid, ya ever play Beethoven's Fourth before?" asked the man.

"Simon thought for a moment before answering. "Is that the one with the fast bassoon solo in the last movement?" He asked.

"Dat's da one."

"Well, if you don't mind my slurring two and tonguing two, I believe I could play it," said Simon.

Simon was ushered into the building and shortly found himself on stage in the first bassoon chair of a very large group of other musical instruments. This is what he had always dreamed of. This is what he had traveled many

days from his small town to do. And now it was actually going to happen. From the side of the very wide stage there appeared the leader. Simon guessed it was the leader by the large wand he carried. This was the wand Simon had heard magically kept so many different musical instruments playing together. The leader was a middle-aged man with a rather significant belly.

Simon was sure he had seen this man somewhere before.

The rehearsal went beautifully. Simon was thrilled with the sounds coming from all the musical instruments together. And he thought he had done well playing the very difficult bassoon passage in the last movement. Even though he had not articulated every note as Mr. Beethoven had indicated. He had tongued two and slurred two. Perhaps no one had noticed. After all the passage had gone by so fast it was almost impossible to keep track of it.

After the musical instruments had played for exactly one hour and a half, a rest period was announced. All the players wandered off stage to take a rest. But the leader motioned for Simon to come to his private dressing room. When the two of them were seated in the man's dressing room, the man said to Simon,

"Not bad kid, but unless you can tongue all d' notes in the famous bassoon passage in the last movement of Mr. Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, I'm gonna have to let ya go."

Simon was deeply saddened by this situation.

He knew he would not be able to tongue the passage in Mr. Beethoven's Symphony as fast as the middle-aged man with the significant belly wanted. But he wanted to continue playing with all these wondrous musical instruments. What to do. What to do? Even though the middle-aged man with the significant belly seemed to know everything about Mr. Beethoven's music, perhaps a story would enchant him enough to allow Simon to continue playing with the other musical instruments a bit longer. It was worth the try. And so Simon began to explain.

"Sir, I do believe that Mr. Beethoven never intended for the bassoon to articulate every note in the solo of the last movement of his Symphony Number Four and I can explain if you would be so kind. Mr. Beethoven used a quill pen which he constantly dipped into an inkwell to replenish the writing ability of the quill. It was his custom to write from beginning to end first all the notes he wished to be played. Upon completion of all the notes he returned to the beginning to repeat the process for the writing down of all the dynamics he wished. All the time the quill pen was dipping and writing. Finally he once again began at the beginning to write in all the articulations, slurs and separated notes. He was just into the middle of the last movement, just exactly before the bassoon solo we have been discussing when he ran out of ink. Even though he intended to write slurs over the bassoon solo an empty inkwell prevented him from doing so. And so generations of bassoon players have had to suffer the consequences of that empty inkwell."

The leader stared at Simon for several long moments. Since he himself had rarely read a book. Since he himself had ascended to being the leader by virtue of his father's influence in the town. Since he himself really didn't know that much about music. And since he himself had never played a musical instrument very well, he himself didn't want to appear ignorant in the presence of a subordinate. He himself responded as follows,

"Yeah! Yeah! . . . I think I heard o' that situation with Mr. Beethoven. Too bad. Too bad. Poor guy. Ya gotta feel for d'guy. Well it's my foim conviction dat we proceed as Mr. Beethoven wanted, not as he is misintoipeted by those other leaders. I do believe dat slurs are what d'piece calls for. If ya would be so kind . . ."

And so Simon lived happily ever after making music on his bassoon with the other musical instruments. He especially enjoyed playing Mr. Beethoven's Fourth Symphony which he in time learned to articulate correctly. However it was this first encounter with Mr. Beethoven's Fourth Symphony which had taught him a valuable lesson . . . Where there's a quill, there's a way.

Alan Goodman
Bassoon Player, Los Angeles Philharmonic



(BLUE RIBBON: continued from page 1)

While Part I of the Blue Ribbon report recommended raising performance standards for locals, and Part II recommended significant changes in convention procedures and voting reform, Part III (Financial Reform) was the heart of the report. Part III recommended four major changes in funding—a major increase in “per capita” dues (the annual dues that locals pay to the AFM for each member), an increase in recording work dues, an increase and standardization of work dues on traveling engagements done under AFM “pamphlets” (mostly theater work), and an elimination of national work dues on all engagements not done under CBA’s, except for work funded by the Music Performance Trust Funds. (This last recommendation caused Dennis Dreith, president of RMA, to withdraw his name from the recommendations. Dreith believed that eliminating work dues on casual engagements was not only unfair, but would lead to an overdependence on per capita dues—an unwise move given the AFM’s declining membership, in his view.)

The report described the per capita increases as the “center-piece” of the Deliberative Committee’s financial recommendations. And it was the epicenter(piece) of enormous controversy, because the increases were very large indeed. Per capita dues were doubled on life members, and for regular members, the amount went from \$12 to \$40 per year—a 333% increase. The Committee was quite forthright about both the bitterness of this pill for locals and its necessity; they wrote that “while the Committee anticipates the predictable response to these recommendations and the membership losses that might result, it respectfully suggests that similar membership losses would result if the income had been generated through increases in other areas; specifically. . . Work Dues.” The report went on to state that “the committee feels that all basic ‘turn-key’ services provided by the Federation to all its Members should be funded essentially through Per Capita Dues. . . all members must share the responsibility for the necessary funding. The Committee feels very strongly that the Federation cannot survive as the sole representative of professional musicians unless this new philosophical direction is endorsed, merchandised, and accepted.”

In retrospect, it all seems the equivalent of motherhood and apple pie. But it represented a radical change in thinking for the AFM. After all, this was a union that had funded itself during the “big band” years by an enormous work dues on traveling groups; a union that had created an enormous pool of money diverted, in essence, from the pockets of its recording musicians in order to fund part-time work for other members; and a union that had blithely charged hefty national work dues on recording and symphonic work while providing precious little national service in exchange. The idea that the basic operations of the union should be funded by all its members equitably was a dramatic departure from the AFM’s past.

But the Blue Ribbon Committee went further. It recognized not only the principle that basic union functions should be funded by the entire membership, but went on to recognize that work dues on specific segments of the membership should go to fund services specifically for those members. The report stated that, at then-current work dues levels, “the expanded services necessary for [recording musicians] would have to be subsidized by income from

members in other areas of the membership (italics added). Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Federation share of Work Dues on electronic work . . . be increased from 1/2% to 3/4%.” For the first time, the AFM publicly recognized that, just as it was unfair to ask a few members to pay for services to all, it was equally unfair to ask all members to pay for services to a few.

The Committee extended this concept to symphonic and touring musicians as well; “the Committee *strongly* recommends that personnel and services available through the Symphonic Services Division be substantially increased to levels commensurate with the needs enumerated by ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA, which can be fully funded by the 1/2% Federation Work Dues currently being collected on . . . orchestras.” For touring musicians, the Committee not only recommended that touring work dues be set at 3%, with only 1/2% going to locals, but that the new money “be directed toward both restaffing and additional personnel for the Federation Touring Division.”

This was all pretty hairy stuff, but in the final part of its reports (Part IV – Recommendations), Blue Ribbon took several leaps into the truly radical. The Committee wrote that it

- “strongly recommends that the IEB continue and intensify its investigation of Trade Divisions within the AFM in the Symphonic and Electronic areas;
- “recommends that its consideration of various regional service and administrative concepts be actively continued and expanded by the IEB;
- recommended that, by July 1, 1992, the IEB “engage an International Operations Manager, whose primary function would be management of the Federation’s operations;”
- recommended moving the AFM’s headquarters out of New York; and
- recommended the creation of an “AFM-owned and operated nationwide job referral/talent/booking agency.”

But committees only propose, no matter what color their ribbons. Conventions dispose of what committees propose, and then the executive officers in power use their considerable powers to shape the results of the Convention to their own comfort and beliefs.

So what happened to all of these recommendations?

Most of the Committee’s recommendations in Parts I and II were actually enacted and written into the AFM’s bylaws. The dues increases proposed in Part III were also enacted, albeit with some important changes. The proposal for an “automatic annual increase in . . . Member Per Capita Dues based on the annual Cost of Living” indices ended up on the cutting room floor, while some very adroit maneuvering by some powerful local officers resulted in their locals not having to pay symphonic work dues on some large orchestras in their jurisdictions. But, notwithstanding these losses, virtually all of the action items of the Blue Ribbon report were legislated into existence, much to the surprise of some skeptics who doubted that the political will for change really existed in the AFM.

Three conventions later, though, the AFM faced virtually the same problems that had supposedly been fixed in 1991. It

was almost out of money and projecting major deficits, while the musicians working under CBA's were once again beating the war drums for increased service. What happened?

The answers can be found in Blue Ribbon Part IV and what happened—or didn't happen—to those recommendations.

Blue Ribbon did not promise a specific budget for the operating departments. It did, though, strongly recommend that "personnel and services available through the Symphonic Services Division be substantially increased to levels commensurate with the needs enumerated by ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA."

A very comprehensive statement of those needs was provided by ICSOM chairperson Brad Buckley in an interview with *Senza Sordino* in February 1991. He said that "actuarial services for pension analysis, public relations help during disputes, accounting services for financial analysis of our institutions, political lobbying, legal assistance, and computer services for contract comparisons are just some of the services we need." Did we get them?

The year following the enactment of Blue Ribbon offered real hope that the needs of symphonic musicians might finally be met by their union. In 1992, the AFM spent almost 40% more on symphonic staff than the previous year. But since then, staff compensation has actually *decreased* by 13%. Even including other expenses and overhead (as well as the Orchestra Services Program), expenditures on SSD rose only 18% since 1992, while total AFM spending increased 73%. The number of full-time SSD staff has also decreased, and now stands at a *lower number than before* Blue Ribbon, while one of SSD's staffers is currently pinch-hitting as the trustee of a local. So much for "substantially increas[ing] personnel and services available through the Symphonic Services Division."

And the needs enumerated by Buckley in 1991 remain largely unmet, even the most basic. The AFM still does not have a complete set of symphonic collective bargaining agreements on file, for example. There is no systematic program to monitor our orchestra institutions' finances. There is no help with pension analysis. There is no help with benefits analysis. There is no help (at least from trained professionals) for PR during negotiations. And there is no more help with legal and legislative needs than there was before Blue Ribbon. Why? Because SSD doesn't have enough staff. Our needs remain largely unmet by the AFM, seven years after the promises of Blue Ribbon, because the SSD has even fewer staff than it did in 1991.

Where did the money go, if not to SSD? The Electronic Media Services Division saw much-needed and substantial increases in its budgets. But Travel/Touring, the other department that was promised significantly increased funding in Blue Ribbon, got the shaft. The Marketing/PR department, formed in 1995 at the Convention's behest, has been eliminated. Organizing (likewise formed in 1995) has also seen its budget diminish, and one of its staffers is running a trustee local as well.

The department that has done the best since Blue Ribbon is the President's Executive Office, which saw its personnel budget increase from \$79,400 in 1991 to \$239,316 in 1996—nearly triple. Symphony musicians are all too familiar with organizations that

spend more and more on the front-office empire and less and less on the folks that actually produce the product—we call them "orchestras." Evidently our union has fallen prey to the same disorder.

What about the other recommendations in Part IV?

- Did the IEB "continue and intensify its investigation of Trade Divisions?" Hardly. In fact, the concept was dropped completely until it surfaced briefly during the botched restructure effort of 1997, only to be met with furious opposition. The attitude of the current administration towards the concept of a trade division for symphonic musicians is openly hostile. And no wonder—locals hate the idea of losing symphonic work dues to a trade division, and local officers elect the executive officers of the AFM.

- Did the IEB "actively continue and expand" Blue Ribbon's "consideration of various regional service and administrative concepts?" Hardly. While this concept, too, surfaced briefly during last year's structure discussions, it also ran into a stone wall. Why? Because locals hate the idea of losing money and power to any kind of regional structure, and local officers elect the executive officers of the AFM.

- Did the IEB "engage an International Operations Manager, whose primary function would be management of the Federation's operations?" Apparently not. This concept didn't even bother to raise its head last year in the restructure discussions. But then it's not surprising that any elected administration of the AFM would be reluctant to hand over authority to a professional manager. There are symphony board chairpersons who have the same reluctance—generally the same ones that run their orchestras into the ground.

- Did the AFM "[move] the AFM's headquarters out of New York?" Moving the offices to almost any other location would save close to \$500,000 just on rent—*every year*. Of course, the officers and staff would have had to move as well, which may account for the fact that this recommendation was also filed in the recycling bin.

- Did the AFM create an "AFM-owned and operated nationwide job referral/talent/booking agency?" Need you ask?

It all forms a pretty sorry record of broken promises and lost opportunities. A nationwide booking and referral service might have helped stem the ongoing membership loss in the casual-engagement sector of our union. A trade division for symphonic musicians might have been able to provide the services that the players conferences have continued to demand. A professional manager running the AFM might have been able to spend more money on direct services to musicians and less on executive office staff. Regionalization had real potential to strengthen the union, at least in some important areas. And moving the AFM office out of New York could have saved the AFM well over \$3 million since 1991.

But without those promises being honored, the AFM's financial condition went from surpluses in 1995 to having almost no cash in 1997. There were, of course, other factors. The AFM's officers wanted a pay raise in 1995, which the Convention gave them—but then also gave themselves an unneeded increase in Convention per diem (both per diems and AFM officers' salaries had been cut as part of the Blue Ribbon recommendations in 1991).

The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)

Statement of Revenues and Expenses

For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1996 to May 31, 1997

	GENERAL FUND	EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	ICSOM MEMORIAL AWARDS	TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS
Revenues				
Dues 95-96	11,772.00			11,772.00
Dues 96-97	109,890.00			109,890.00
Interest Income	2,884.47	7,599.44	421.48	10,905.39
Book Royalties	5,478.28			5,478.28
Refunds & Reimbursements	1,551.05			1,551.05
Contribution Income	240.00			240.00
Transfers from Other Funds	3,500.00		2,570.00	6,070.00
Total Revenues	135,315.80	7,599.44	2,991.48	145,906.72
Expenses				
Legal Expenses	28,600.00			28,600.00
ICSOM Conference Expenses	21,800.02			21,800.02
Senza Sordino	16,960.95			16,960.95
Telephone	10,938.69			10,938.69
Directories	8,024.83			8,024.83
Office Equipment	7,373.02			7,373.02
Honoraria	7,000.00			7,000.00
Travel	6,067.04			6,067.04
Scholarship Awards	4,500.00			4,500.00
Conductor Evaluations	3,341.43			3,341.43
Media Committee	3,316.78			3,316.78
OCSM, ROPA Conferences	2,665.00			2,665.00
Stationary & Supplies	2,290.00			2,290.00
AFM Convention	2,248.88			2,248.88
Postage	2,023.39			2,023.39
Dues Refund	1,860.00			1,860.00
Email	1,831.02			1,831.02
Duplication	1,777.38			1,777.38
Book Expenses	1,661.40			1,661.40
Organizing	1,470.17			1,470.17
Accounting Expenses	1,000.00			1,000.00
Income Replacement	972.37			972.37
Emeritus	859.53			859.53
Subscriptions	458.50			458.50
Bank Charges	170.00			170.00
Good & Welfare	165.06			165.06
Transfers to Other Funds	2,570.00		3,500.00	6,070.00
Total Expenses	141,945.46	0.00	3,500.00	145,445.46
Revenues over (under) Expenses	(6,629.66)	7,599.44	(508.52)	461.26

	GENERAL FUND	EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	ICSOM MEMORIAL AWARDS	TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS
Changes in Fund Balances				
Fund Balances, beginning of year	98,107.43	174,519.54	12,298.53	284,925.50
Income	135,315.80	7,599.44	2,991.48	145,906.72
Less Expenses	141,945.46	0.00	3,500.00	145,445.46
Fund Balances, end of year	91,477.77	182,118.98	11,790.01	285,386.76

Balance Sheet

For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1996 to May 31, 1997

Assets

Cash - checking	72,862.28			72,862.28
Investments		116,816.05	11,790.01	128,606.06
Prepaid Expenses	4,146.49			4,146.49
Dues Receivable	14,469.00			14,469.00
Loans Receivable		65,302.93		65,302.93
Total Assets	91,477.77	182,118.98	11,790.01	285,386.76

Liabilities & Fund Balances

Total Liabilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance	91,477.77	182,118.98	11,790.01	285,386.76
Total Liab & Fund Balances	91,477.77	182,118.98	11,790.01	285,386.76

(BLUE RIBBON: continued from page 9)

The 1997 AFM delegates then started to spend money on things that really needed to be done, such as the formation of organizing and marketing departments. Unfortunately, *not one* AFM officer stood up and told the Convention what they all knew—that new spending of that magnitude, unaccompanied by a dues increase, was going to lead to deficits, and sooner rather than later. Such a failure of leadership was understandable—most of the officers were running for re-election, and promising new services is a better way to get elected than promising new taxes. Besides, which of them was going to stand up and tell the Convention that there was enough money to increase officers' salaries, but not enough for the AFM to actually get anything new done?

So the inevitable happened when falling revenues met increasing expenditures and vanishing reserves. The resulting belt-tightening caused the AFM to reduce its expenditures from \$9.7 million in 1996 to \$8.9 million in 1997—a decrease of almost 10%. True to the historic pattern, SSD expenditures took a much bigger hit—a 17% decrease, even though work dues from symphonic musicians continued to rise.

What are the lessons to be learned from the unraveling of Blue Ribbon? Certainly we could learn that a healthy skepticism about promises made but not enacted into cast-iron bylaws is always handy. It's the same lesson we've all learned from our employers—it can be very hard to get management to honor promises that were not written into the contract.

But the deeper lesson to be learned is about the nature of the AFM. Our union, like our orchestras, is an institution with complex internal dynamics, subject to many conflicting pressures, run by very fallible people with their own agendas. While its stated mission is to serve its members, it will generally follow the path of least resistance—which means putting its own needs (and those of the people who run it) before everything else.

In dealing with our managements, we have learned that the price of having promises honored is eternal vigilance—and the occasional job action. It is time that we learned that the price of having our union honor its promises and obligations to its members is the same.

Robert Levine
ICSOM Chair

Newslets

**The ICSOM-OCSM-ROPA-RMA-TMA
UNITY CONFERENCE**

**August 19 – 23, 1998
The Riviera Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada**

All Unity Conference reservations should now be made. Don't forget to notify our official travel agents **Susan Levine** or **Carl King** at Travel Gems of your planned attendance, *whether or not you made lodging and travel arrangements through Travel Gems.* Susan and Carl can be reached at 1-800-569-4495, 212-889-3131, Fax 212-889-8688, or suetravel@aol.com.

Unity Conference Keynote Speaker:
Kenneth Paff
*of the
Teamsters for a Democratic Union*

Belated word has come to us that **Ralph Robert Maisel**, St. Louis Symphony Emeritus and ICSOM Secretary and Vice-Chairman in the 1960's and 1970's, passed away on February 22, 1997. Our condolences go to the family of Mr. Maisel, in gratitude for his many years of service to the family of orchestra musicians.

What is a Trade Division?

Some International Unions are organized into divisions of like-employed members. These divisions operate under the umbrella of the International. Thus, everyone is a member of the International Union, but gets services from a specific division of the International. This concept may be the best way to provide services to symphonic orchestra musicians in the diverse membership present in the AFM.

from Senza Sordino, Vol. 28, No. 5/6 June-August 1990

Notice to All Senza Sordino Addressees:

ARE YOU MOVING?

If your address has changed, or soon will, please notify the editor. That way, *Senza Sordino* can continue to reach you quickly, without taking scenic detours though many branch offices of the United States Postal Service, including a long plane ride to sunny Honolulu, before finally arriving at your new address. This journey is fraught with danger, and many a *Senza* is lost before being united with its rightful owner. Don't let your *Senza* take a Hawaiian vacation without you! Send in your address correction today.

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\$10 per year, payable to
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905 Spencer Street #404
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Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 36, NO. 5

On-line Edition

October 1998

TOWARD A BETTER UNION

At the 1997 ICSOM Conference the delegates resolved to create, in league with the other player conferences, an Investigative Task Force (ITF) to look into ways to fix the persistent problems of the American Federation of Musicians. They also resolved to join with the other player conferences this summer for the first-ever Unity Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, the largest gathering of rank-and-file AFM members under collective bargaining in the history of the AFM, to discuss the fruits of the ITF's labor.



No one broke the ice (but it did get a little melted) at the Wednesday evening dinner for all Unity Conference participants. (photo: Dennis Molchan, courtesy of RMA)

At the first ICSOM-only session at Unity, ICSOM Chair Robert Levine described the difficulties ICSOM had experienced during the past year in dealing with the AFM. The intention of the Roehl report, which formalized the meetings of the International Executive Board and player conference leadership, was to foster better dialogue among those parties, but that intention was not being met in meetings with the IEB. The lack of money in the AFM has hamstrung operations, notably in the Symphonic Services Division, where a smaller staff must handle continuing and increasing problems in orchestras. Levine acknowledged that ICSOM's criticism of the AFM has ruffled feathers, but he explained that we must raise sensitive issues and tell the truth as we see it as a matter of responsibility to our members.

While the Unity Conference's purpose was to find ways to fix the union from within, ICSOM also explored what can happen when evolution gives way to revolution in union reform. ICSOM hosted guest speaker Martin Foster, contrabassoonist of the Sydney Symphony, who gave us a harrowing description of the secession of Australia's symphony musicians from the tyrannical and intractable Musicians' Union of Australia. While there are structural similarities between the MUA and the AFM, there are also major differences, notably the blatant corruption of the Australian union (for instance, union officials would continue to pay the dues of deceased members to control their votes) and a long history of totally ignoring the needs of the symphonic musicians. The AFM, on the other hand, has been willing to address issues of reform and, despite serious difficulties, honestly seeks to serve its musicians. Mr. Foster made it clear that had the Australian symphony musicians been able to reform their union from within, they would have done so.

ICSOM delegates also had a chance to learn about a part of the Federation that is little-known to most members, the International Representatives. IR Don Shumate described the IR's basic

function—enforcing the AFM Bylaws as they relate to the local's operation. Each local is required by the AFM Bylaws to have an answering machine, an orientation program, a business agent, a business office, to maintain certain hours of operation, to have a service catalog, employment referral, or booking agency, and an approved book-keeping system. Each local must publish a newsletter, an annual financial statement, local bylaws, a roster of members and scales, must pay a wage to officers, be affiliated with a regional conference,

and have at least 3 membership meetings and 3 board meetings per year.

IR Dennis Lynch described a new program just getting underway, using IRs to help train local officers, improve communication among musicians, and increase the visibility of the union with the goal of increasing union membership and involvement. Several locals have been targeted to participate in a pilot program, among them Atlanta, Buffalo, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis, Norfolk, and Sacramento.

Brad Buckley, ICSOM Electronic Media Negotiation Chair, spoke on the upcoming phonograph labor agreement negotiations and brought to the attention of the delegates the requirement that all media language in orchestra contracts must be approved by the Federation before ratification. AFM President Steve Young agreed to take a more active role in ensuring that this requirement is enforced. Brad also described a new business structure for symphony orchestra recording—the orchestra establishing its own recording company as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the orchestra. Brad was

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The ITF Proposals

The Investigative Task Force had one overriding goal: to discover those principles on which a labor union must be built in order truly to be a labor union, and then to apply those principles to our own union in order that the AFM might survive as a labor union into the 21st century.

I. Put Organizing First

PROBLEM: The AFM and its Locals far too often forget that the core mission of a labor union is to organize workers for collective action and collective bargaining, and that other functions and activities—however valuable they may be—must never be at the expense of this core mission.

SOLUTION: Article 2 of the Bylaws should be rewritten to stress the priority of collective bargaining in all of the AFM's dealings with and on behalf of its members.

II. Stop Officers from Acting in a Hiring Role

PROBLEM: In many Locals, officers also work as Contractors, Personnel Managers, or Booking Agents. This clear, inherent conflict of interest has a chilling effect on a member's ability to receive fair and impartial representation.

SOLUTION: Local officers should be prevented from serving in a hiring or contracting capacity except as leaders of regularly organized groups, and that the language of the current restrictions on conflict of interest should be strengthened and clarified.

III. Fund the Union More Fairly

PROBLEM: While no tax or dues structure is ever completely fair to all, the following inequities in the current dues structure of the AFM and some Locals must be addressed:

- Life Members pay reduced membership dues but still receive all membership privileges, which sometimes places political control in the hands of those who are not paying "full freight."
- Many types of work are currently not subject to Federation Work Dues.
- Some Locals not only charge different rates of Work Dues for various types of live engagements, but even charge different work dues for the identical type of work.

SOLUTIONS: New admissions into active *Life Membership* status should cease after the year 2000. Federation Work Dues should be charged on all engagements, allowing for a lower rate than the current one for Symphonic Federation Work Dues, with the saving retained by the Local. Locals should charge the same total Work Dues rate for all categories of live work.

IV. Don't Charge for what Dues Should Cover

PROBLEM: The action of the 1997 Convention allowed the AFM to charge members for the cost of collecting claims, despite the fact that they already pay membership dues and work dues for this service. This violates the fundamental tenets of trade unionism.

SOLUTION: The newly added §12-20(b) of the AFM Bylaws should be repealed.

V. Give Conferences Formal Power

PROBLEM: The AFM's structure currently has no direct representation for rank-and-file membership or for specific geographic areas. Player Conferences and Regional Conferences need formal representation with real authority at the Federation level.

SOLUTION: A Conference Representatives Board—made up of a representative from each official Player Conference plus an equal number of representatives from Regional Conferences—should be established. This Board should have formal authority to approve the AFM's budget and all decisions affecting the EMSD, the SSD, the Travel/Touring Department, and the Organizing & Education Department.

VI. Give Local Officers Training

PROBLEM: Local officers—even the most intelligent and well-intentioned—cannot serve their members to the fullest and run their Locals efficiently if they do not have proper training in fundamental union principles and procedures.

SOLUTION: The AFM should provide annual training sessions for all principal Local officers, who should be required to participate in this training at a Regional Conference (or receive equivalent training) as a condition of continuing in office.

VII. Build the AFM's Future

PROBLEM: The AFM does not actively engage in making its presence and purpose known to future generations.

SOLUTION: A new classification of *Student Member* should be created to involve potential future members in the union at an early age.

VIII. Move AFM Headquarters out of New York

PROBLEM: The expense and operational difficulties inherent in a New York headquarters cannot be justified. The cost of doing business in New York is astronomical and the cost of living in the greater New York area makes obtaining and retaining the best staff unnecessarily difficult. In addition, an international union with branches in seven Time Zones should not be headquartered in the easternmost Time Zone of the United States.

SOLUTION: The main office of the AFM should be moved to a location in the Central or Mountain Time Zone which has a reasonable cost of living and of doing business. This move should take place no later than the expiration of the current lease in New York. A one-time Special Assessment of \$10.00 should be imposed on each Federation member in order to pay for the move.



Each of these issues was accompanied by proposed amendments to the AFM Bylaws that would effect the desired changes. The five player conferences at Unity discussed these proposals in their separate sessions and together in the plenary sessions, and each conference made its own decisions about what legislation to submit to the 1999 AFM Convention. Most of the proposals met with general approval from the conferences, but proposals relating to III, VII, and VIII above posed some difficulties for the delegates. The ITF will reconvene in December to reconcile the various conference positions so that a unified set of proposals can be presented to the AFM Convention next summer.

(continued from page 1)

instrumental in developing such a subsidiary for the St. Louis Symphony. (This concept will be further explored in a future *Senza*.)

At the first plenary session, AFM President Steve Young addressed the Conference. He stated that trade divisions, dollar-in-dollar-out economics, restructure and new organizational models were not the answer to the AFM's problems. He outlined three fundamental issues: unity, activism, and education. Members who support each other in unity, get actively involved with their union, and educate themselves and potential new members can change the Federation. Young pointed out that the 27 largest locals acting together could pass any legislation before the Convention in a roll call vote, and he urged that delegates to the 1999 AFM Convention be chosen by their locals according to their service to working musicians.

Keynote speaker Ken Paff of the Teamsters For A Democratic Union then described the courageous union democracy movement within the Teamsters that, despite obstacles and setbacks, remains in a class by itself. A report on Paff's speech stands as an article by itself—see "A High Note, Right On Key" on page 5.



ICSOM's Executive Committee: Senza Editor Schweitzer, Secretary Lewis, Treasurer Tretick, and Chairperson Levine (President Angus is obscured by the lectern), with counsel Leibowitz (Photo: Dennis Molchan)

Because the entire AFM International Executive Board was present for the first time at an ICSOM Conference, ICSOM delegates took the opportunity to invite the IEB for a question-and-answer session. There were pointed questions asked about how the IEB would exercise its leadership role to fix the Federation and whether the IEB would support the ITF proposals at the 1999 AFM Convention. There were many more questions from the floor than there were answers from the IEB, recalling to mind Robert Levine's introductory words two days earlier about the difficulty of dialogue with the IEB.

ICSOM then turned its attention to the ITF proposals. Although there was general agreement that most of the proposals would move the Federation in the right direction, many delegates felt that the proposals didn't go nearly far enough to give musicians a voice in

the union or to bring fairness to the issues of dues payment and service. A delegate noted that the ITF proposals, if passed, would increase the relative power of working musicians in the AFM, making possible more substantial changes afterward. But some delegates felt that the proposals had no teeth, one delegate saying, "actions, not statements, make change." President of New York Local 802 and ITF member Bill Moriarity, acknowledging that this was but a small step in a long journey, urged the delegates to be patient and take the long view. When a delegate asked why we are begging for crumbs from the old guard instead of getting rid of the old guard, Moriarity replied, "In 1991 and 1993 the old guard voted against their short-term interest in favor of a greater good. More than half the time more than half the people will do the right thing."

It was decided that it would be hypocritical for ICSOM to propose that contractors may not serve on union boards without also applying the same standard to the ICSOM Governing Board. A resolution was adopted to amend the ICSOM Bylaws to conform to the proposed AFM Bylaws amendment. ICSOM also proposed to amend the ITF proposals to forbid contracting activity by the delegates to the AFM Convention, and in similar fashion amended the ICSOM Bylaws to apply the same rule to ICSOM delegates.

ICSOM delegates had some problem with the dues equity provisions of the ITF report, feeling that universal work dues throughout the Federation would cost more to collect than it would bring in, and resistance to the dues among casual musicians would drive more work underground. The issue of student membership generated an unexpectedly intense debate. There is already a "youth membership" in the AFM Bylaws, and although the ICSOM delegates supported the principle of recruiting new AFM members, they questioned the effectiveness of adding another complicating layer to the membership structure. The ICSOM delegates resolved that the Federation should simply offer to students the one benefit of the proposed student membership, a half-price subscription to the *International Musician*, without calling it a "student membership."

Another suggested proposal was to remove the 20-vote cap per local in the election of Federation officers and the AFM's AFL-CIO delegates. This cap has the effect of greatly reducing the voting power of the large locals with many members relative to the locals with fewer members. In essence it means that, in locals with more than 2000 members, some members are not represented in the election of national officers. While the ICSOM delegates were generally in sympathy with the intent of the motion, as time ran short at the end of the Conference the delegates voted to table this motion indefinitely.

A few minor changes to the other ITF proposals were authorized by the ICSOM delegates, and by the end of the last day, exhaustion took over. "Democracy at its *n*th level is paralysis," said a tired delegate. "At some point we must trust someone." In the resolutions that were then adopted, the delegates decided to trust the ICSOM Governing Board to carry the mandate of the 1998 Conference through the next year to the AFM Convention in 1999. Robert Levine closed the Conference saying, "I loved democracy coming into this week, but I love it all the more now. Only a strong, confident organization can have its arguments openly in front of outsiders." If that be so, then ICSOM, at age 36, is as hale and hardy as ever.

Are We There Yet?

by Marsha Schweitzer
Editor, Senza Sordino

After the Unity Conference, on the plane out of Las Vegas, I had a chance to catch up on my backlog of reading, including the June 29, 1998 issue of *The Nation*, where I happened upon an article titled “We Need A *Radical Left*” by Ellen Willis. It began this way:

Ellen Willis takes up the “First Principles” series by arguing that leftists are successful when they refuse to think in terms of compromise with majority sentiments and stake out radical alternatives that generate their own support by creating social movements in their wake. Willis says the key question is not “how can we win?” but “what do we believe?”

Throughout our discussions at Unity about the Investigative Task Force proposals, we were reminded by the ITF that the aim of their proposals was somewhere between what we really felt needed to be changed in the AFM and what we thought might have a chance of getting passed by the 1999 AFM Convention. When it came to fixing the AFM, “what do we believe?” had taken a severe beating at the hands of “how can we win?” I instantly knew that Ms. Willis’ article would have great relevance to the conference I had just experienced. So I read on:

While I regard economic inequality as a national emergency and a priority on any serious left agenda, I don’t agree that “fairness,” in itself, is a principle that can successfully combat right-wing ideology and mobilize an effective movement for change. Nor do I think the way to build such a movement is to look for issues that “unite” people. By definition, the project of organizing a democratic political movement entails the hope that one’s ideas and beliefs are not merely idiosyncratic but speak to vital human needs, interests and desires, and therefore will be persuasive to many and ultimately most people. But this is a very different matter from deciding to put forward only those ideas presumed (accurately or not) to be compatible with what most people already believe.

No mass left-wing movement has ever been built on a majoritarian strategy. On the contrary, every such movement—socialism, populism, labor, civil rights, feminism, gay rights, ecology—has begun with a visionary minority whose ideas were at first decried as impractical, ridiculous, crazy, dangerous and/or immoral. By definition, the conventional wisdom of the day is widely accepted, continually reiterated and regarded not as ideology but as reality itself. Rebelling against “reality,” even when its limitations are clearly perceived, is always difficult.

With this I remembered the words of Ken Paff, our brilliant—and wonderfully radical—Unity keynote speaker, who described to us a Teamsters for a Democratic Union that was not just about “fairness” or about finding solutions that would “unite” the factions

within the Teamsters, but about revolutionizing the Teamsters, casting out reiterated “reality” and replacing it with a daring, creative, animate idea about a brave new democratic union that, after years of determined struggle, became their new reality. We white-collar professional unionists can learn a lot from truck drivers. Ms. Willis continues:

... My experience as an early women’s liberation activist was dramatic in this regard. At first we were a small and lonely bunch; our claim that heterosexual relations were unequal everywhere from the office to the kitchen to the bedroom was greeted with incredulity, laughter and blunt aspersions on our sexual and emotional balance. . . . Two years later feminist groups were erupting all over the country, and it was not unusual to see women turn up at demonstrations who had once denounced the whole enterprise in the most withering terms. Suppose we had reacted to that first wave of hostility by concluding, “This will never fly—let’s stick to ‘equal pay for equal work?’ ”

It is not necessary, as many leftists imagine, to round up popular support before anything can be done; on the contrary, the actions of a relatively few troublemakers can lead to popular support. . . . When militant minorities also have radical ideas, they capture people’s imaginations by presenting another possible world that appeals to the secret hopes of even the resigned and cynical. They mobilize people by providing the context in which winning small changes is worth the time and effort because it is part of a larger project. . . . The people in power know all this and are quite wary of the potential threat posed by an organized minority; their impulse is to make concessions (albeit as few as they can get away with). As a result, radical movements that articulate a compelling vision have an impact far beyond their core of committed activists.

We have seen in the history of the AFM over the last 40 years the impact on the AFM, and the concessions that were extracted from the IEB and AFM Conventions, by the “organized minority,” the “radical movements that articulate a compelling vision” within the AFM, notably ICSOM and the RMA. But, although our vocal minority is still organized and perhaps stronger than ever, we are not so radical anymore. Our compelling vision has become fuzzy.

The ITF told us that their proposals are just the first step toward fixing the union. Fine, let’s take the first step. But what will we have after we have taken the last step? What will the AFM look like when it is fixed? Where is the inspiring vision of the promised land—our union utopia—that will galvanize us and make us willing to endure the pain necessary to achieve it? Our first step, our last step, and all those in between will be more resolute if we know where we are going, if we have “the context in which winning small changes is worth the time and effort because it is part of a larger project.” Otherwise, as the saying goes, “if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will do.”

Ms. Willis reminded me that before we can be activists we must be visionaries. Activism is a response to, and is relatively as powerful as, its inspiration—the compelling latent image that, by virtue of its inherent rightness, demands realization. Our activism

will ultimately succeed when it derives its energy from positive creative forces rather than from a negative defensive reaction to the union's problems and politics.

The Unity Conference was a success. The inter-conference dialogue begun at Unity among the delegates of the five player conferences was a catalyst for deeper understanding and continuing debate. The work of the ITF, the five conference boards, and the Unity delegates and guests was very good. The proposals that were endorsed at Unity will, if adopted by the AFM Convention, make the AFM better. I heartily support the Unity proposals. I just want to support so much more.

Author E.L. Doctorow, a true artist if ever there was, offered a marvelous definition of art and artist: "the work of independent witness, that often self-destructive willingness to articulate that which many may feel but no one dares to say, the blundering, struggling effort to connect the visible to the invisible, to find the secret meanings of places and things, to release the spirit from the clay—that rude, stubborn, squawking, self-appointed voice singing the unsingable."

At the Unity Conference we did some squawking, and some singing (including an impromptu attempt at the Canadian national anthem by the Americans), but we never tapped into the place in our collective imagination where art resides. Until we can find a vision for our union that transcends the current realities—economic, structural, political—we will be imprisoned by those realities. When we can begin to see the unseeable, then we artistic union activists will finally be able to sing the unsingable.

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A High Note, Right On Key

The defining moment of the Unity Conference was the keynote speech by Ken Paff of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union. The TDU was largely responsible for the recent sweeping reforms in the Teamsters, winning the right of rank-and-file members to popularly elect their national officers, electing Ron Carey to the Presidency of the Teamsters, and using rank-and-file strength to win a major strike against the United Parcel Service last year. Paff told us that the basis of a strong democratic union is rank-and-file involvement and solidarity. "We changed ourselves as much as the union," he said.

Paff offered some powerful advice to us in reforming our union. After telling us about the shady Teamsters pension fund investments that built the casinos in Las Vegas, he explained that, although rampant corruption was a major obstacle in changing the Teamsters, the real problem was not the corruption, but that the union was not doing its job, not serving the members. The TDU was not about individuals, he said, but about principles—principles of unionism and union democracy. But democracy is not just an abstract principle; it is a tool to get the job done, to reform the union.

The Teamsters and the AFM share at least one common problem—the need to adapt to a changing environment. Looking toward greater nationalization of the union is one way that the Teamsters are adapting—national rather than local contracts, non-geographic locals and bargaining units, and breaking down barriers between people in different locales and industries. "Global work needs global negotiating."

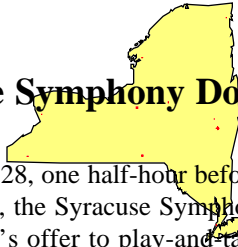
The high point of the Conference for the *Senza Sordino* editor was Mr. Paff's reference to recent *Senza* articles on dissent in the AFM, comparing us to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters—the "Sordinistas!" he said. But lest our ardor overwhelm our prudence, he also warned that the rise of the TDU was "not a sprint, but a marathon. The union got screwed up over time; it will take time to fix it."

Ken Paff is a quiet, unassuming man who started his working life as a truck driver in Cleveland, Ohio. His journey took him from the cab of his truck to the leadership of a rebellion against some of the most dangerous and entrenched power in America. It was raw union strength and courage that spoke from the Unity Conference podium that day in Vegas. Yet Mr. Paff ended his speech with a quiet tribute to the social philosophy of unionism. "A strong labor movement is the antidote to corporate greed and human poverty. We—unions—make a better society."

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5,000 Miles (East to West) of ICSOM Orchestra News

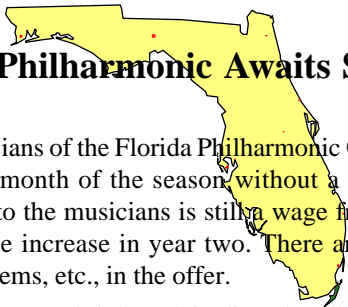
Syracuse Symphony Dodges Bullet



On September 28, one half-hour before the first rehearsal of the 1998/99 season, the Syracuse Symphony musicians voted to reject management's offer to play-and-talk unless management removed cuts from the bargaining table. This vote effectively put the Syracuse Symphony musicians on strike. On September 30 management removed the cuts from the table and presented their "best and final" offer. The orchestra played the opening concerts of the season, then on October 4, voted on the offer, ratifying management's "best and final" offer.

This was the only offer management ever presented that warranted any sort of thoughtful response from the musicians; unfortunately, management insisted it was not negotiable—a "take it or else" situation. It is a three-year contract at 38 weeks and 0%, 2%, and 4% raises, with an additional 2% to begin when a side letter on archival CD production and marketing is accepted. Full-time positions stay at 60, leaving seven positions occupied by subs. Also, there are two other side letters expanding the use of the orchestra for fundraising events and addressing the seven unfilled positions, and the understanding that talks will continue regarding the "noneconomics."

Florida Philharmonic Awaits Showdown



The musicians of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra are now in the second month of the season without a contract. What is being offered to the musicians is still a wage freeze for year one and a 3% wage increase in year two. There are no increases in pension, per diems, etc., in the offer.

In an attempt to brighten this dismal package, management agreed to a couple of noneconomic items and introduced profit-sharing. In the second year of the contract, the musicians would share any money raised over the \$10.8 million annual budget, up to 2% of their salaries. The musicians told management they were not interested in profit-sharing.

Making this all the more difficult is a situation in which the New World Symphony (NWS), a non-union "training" orchestra in Miami, allegedly violated the fence agreement it negotiated with the AFM and took work away from the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra (FPO) musicians. [The fence agreement is a set of rules agreed to by the New World Symphony that are intended to

prevent the non-union "student" musicians from encroaching into work areas that professional musicians depend upon for their living.] NWS musicians reportedly did a recording that was originally offered to the FPO musicians by the Florida Grand Opera. When the FPO musicians had refused to do the Opera's recording under terms that were contrary to the national AFM media agreements, the Opera turned to the NWS for non-union labor, which, it is claimed, the NWS provided.

The orchestra has taken a strike authorization vote, but the musicians are all hoping management will come back to the table with something that will avoid a work stoppage. Musicians are continually meeting with politicians and preparing for a large media blitz. It is, of course, hoped that things will be resolved soon; however, there seems to be very little interest from management's side to bring anything back to the table. The FPO is still in an executive director search; the musicians' participation in that search has gone from minimal to nonexistent. The orchestra is staying optimistic that a settlement will be forthcoming while at the same time preparing for the worst.

Louisville Orchestra Continues On Track



The new agreement that the musicians of the Louisville Orchestra recently ratified is a natural outgrowth of the strengths and knowledge gained during their five years of struggles against downsizing. (See the "Rhapsody In Bluegrass" series, *Senza Sordino* May 1997–January 1998.) In fighting back an attempt to cut the number of full-time musicians from 70 to 45, the musicians combined an in-depth study of the orchestra's economic structure and marketing with a sophisticated public education strategy to short-circuit the management's plan, then cooperated with a new management team to begin rebuilding a financial base that would support the reconstruction of the orchestra and the musicians' salary scale.

The new contract is a manifestation of that process, in which the musicians built an independent and informed team that had the power and the knowledge to participate fully in management decisions that affected them. The musicians felt that entering these negotiations they had four strengths which they had never possessed in previous contract talks:

PARTICIPATION: The musicians showed determination and independence during the previous negotiations. This pressure resulted in the musicians' involvement in a series of management studies, which gave them tremendous insight into the organization's financial structure, and eventually helped effect the appointment of a new board president. The new board president initiated the restructuring of the board which in turn began implementing decisions which are revitalizing the institution.

KNOWLEDGE: During the negotiations the musicians were able to engage in dialogue with the board regarding how much money could be prudently devoted to their salaries. Drawing upon the comprehensive knowledge of the Orchestra's operations and finances the musicians had developed, they made informed

projections about marketing revenues for the coming season and offered detailed plans for new fundraising initiatives and income that could be added to the bottom line.

RELATIONSHIPS: The working relationships that the musicians developed with board members during the management studies paid off. The musicians were able to informally communicate their goals in a relatively placid atmosphere which prevailed through a majority of the negotiations. These good working relationships also contributed to some last-minute communication that averted more serious troubles.

ORGANIZATION: The organizational skills which the musicians' committee had developed during its struggles proved invaluable in the crunch. By integrating the resources of their consultants into their own knowledge of the institution, the musicians were able to keep the negotiations on track even while the board was wrestling with a changeover in the executive director's position.

The significant salary increases after five years of concessions signal a major reversal in the Louisville Orchestra's decline. The number of weeks, which had fallen from 45 to 40 per season, has started a slow climb back with 41 guaranteed in each season. And the musicians' negotiating committee fought hard for the symbolically important \$30,000 base pay in the contract's final year, which represents approximately a 21% increase over the old contract.

The most hopeful and innovative sign of the settlement lies in the acceptance by both the musicians and the Society of a "Musician-Board Alliance." To create a comfortable financial cushion for the next set of contract negotiations, the "MBA" contractually commits the management to four major fundraising initiatives.

The community resources necessary to sustain a symphony orchestra are not merely financial. What could and can be done with the financial resources available are not necessarily what the management has the collective will and courage to do, so the task of musicians often is to provide the intangible elements of motivation and desire to fulfill the institution's mission. Vigilance and work must be extended beyond the satisfaction of a signed contract. The musicians have many challenges before them, but because the LO board and musicians have heeded the wake-up call to reality, the collision course of the past has been averted. Both the board and musicians want the orchestra enough to have found a new way of doing business. And, in so doing, may have found another way for other hard-pressed orchestral musicians to seize control of their fates and take the difficult first steps to restoring the integrity of their orchestras.

Reborn Alabama Symphony Rejoins ICSOM

At the 1998 ICSOM/Unity Conference, ICSOM delegates had the pleasure of again electing to ICSOM membership the Alabama Symphony, absent from our ranks for several years due to bankruptcy. (See Senza Sordino, March 1997.) The determined efforts

of Alabama musicians, their union, and an enlightened community brought the orchestra back, and David Pandolfi, Alabama ICSOM Delegate and President of Birmingham Local 256-733, offers this account of their remarkable success. -Ed.

On January 7, 1993 the Alabama Symphony Association cancelled the remainder of the 1992-93 season. Bankruptcy proceedings were initiated almost immediately. The decision of the court allowing the ASO to declare Chapter 11 in order to obtain relief from the obligation of the CBA was appealed and won on September 30, 1996. To quote from the court: "The decision of the Bankruptcy Court granting the debtor's application to reject the collective bargaining agreement with the Birmingham Musicians Protective Association is reversed and vacated." The musicians were granted super priority claim status and received payments from the liquidation of the assets of the Alabama Symphony Association.

Preliminary talks with a small group of symphony volunteers began in late 1993. These discussions were primarily about the hard assets (music library, instruments, stands, chairs, etc.) of the Alabama Symphony Association. With support from the former ASO players, the volunteers purchased the hard assets from the court in the hope that any new symphony organization would have use of them. Further talks centered around an endowment which would help satisfy the need for the financial stability of any new organization. The sum of ten million dollars was recommended and agreed upon as the starting point in an endowment drive, with an additional sum of five million to be raised for operating expenses.

Serious talks with board members of a new symphony association began in 1996. A letter of recognition was signed by the new symphony association, making Local 256-733 of Birmingham the sole bargaining agent for the musicians. The contract of the former ASO was used as a model in order to retain the twenty-five years of improvements in working conditions that it contained. From the 68 members of the bankrupt ASO, 34 expressed interest in returning. Of the 34, only 31 were able to be accommodated due to the instrumentation requirements of a smaller orchestra. A 2-year contract was signed in June of 1997 which included 48 full-time musicians with a second-year minimum salary of \$21,012 for 34 weeks.

The ASO is performing most of its concerts in a new 1300-seat concert hall on the campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. After completing a successful inaugural season in the black, management offered the musicians an additional week of paid vacation in the second year of the contract, which was accepted.

Pledges for the endowment are up to \$11.6 million with a new goal of \$15 million. The current balance in the endowment account is \$5.8 million.

The musicians of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra would like to thank ICSOM and its members for their financial and moral support during the shutdown.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 7)

San Antonio Symphony Ends Lock Out Under Threat Of Bankruptcy

On September 30, the Symphony Society of San Antonio and its locked-out musicians ratified a new three-year collective bargaining agreement and opened their 60th anniversary season. The administrative staff, laid off a few days before the settlement, will also return to work.

A \$5 million rescue package put together by local businesses and the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation is expected to eliminate the orchestra's \$2.1 million debt, build a cash reserve, and add \$2.5 million over five years to the symphony's endowment fund (to be matched by another \$2.5 million in public contributions)—contingent, however, on the symphony's operating within a balanced budget and escrowing advance ticket sales. "What the symphony has accomplished is a five-year plan for permanent financial stability for this orchestra," said Charlie Lutz, symphony board chairman.

When contract talks deadlocked in mid-September, a mediation team of Fred Zenone, cellist with the National Symphony, and Nick Webster, former executive director of the New York Philharmonic, successfully brokered a deal. The musicians accepted a two-year wage freeze at last season's base minimum salary of \$732 a week, rising to \$800 a week in the third year of the agreement. The size of the orchestra remains at 77 musicians. The current season will be shortened by four weeks—the three already lost plus one unpaid vacation week next March—but the last two years of the contract will return to 39 weeks. Pension is frozen at 6% for two years, increased to 7% in the third year. There is a new, reorganized board of 15, including some of the new stakeholders in the orchestra and 3 musician reps. Jean Robinson, orchestra committee chair, said the musicians voted overwhelmingly to accept the agreement. Otherwise, "we were facing bankruptcy, as I understand it," she said.

San Diego Symphony Is Back!

Things looked bleak in May 1996 when the San Diego Symphony board declared Chapter 7 bankruptcy, put the musicians out of work, and left California's second-largest city without an orchestra. (See *Senza Sordino*, October 1996 and March 1997.)

Due to the dogged persistence of the San Diego musicians and their allies, that dark picture is now looking brighter. In January 1997 the Chapter 7 bankruptcy was converted to a Chapter 11 reorganization, stopping the sale of the symphony's assets, notably Copley Symphony Hall and the music library. The symphony board was reorganized, and on June 15, 1998 the bankruptcy court confirmed the musician-drafted reorganization plan, putting the orchestra back in business and providing a monetary settlement to the symphony's past creditors, including the musicians. Musicians received full payment only for their priority wage claims (for wages earned within ninety days of the bankruptcy filing, but capped at a maximum of \$4,000). Along with other unsecured creditors, they will receive only

about three cents on the dollar for the substantial remainder of their claims.

But now the past is past, the slate has been wiped clean, and for the city of San Diego and its orchestra, the future is here. The San Diego Symphony resumed concerts on July 23, 1998, beginning a well-received summer season of eight weeks, held on a downtown waterfront pier, a new location made available by the U.S. Navy. The new winter season, which begins October 9 with subscription concerts, will also include pops concerts, silent movies, a new "LightBulb" series, and a newly redesigned educational program.

None of this could have happened without Larry Robinson, whose \$2 million gift and steadfast support were the centerpiece of the reorganization plan. Also invaluable were the *pro bono* legal services, totalling more than \$250,000, of Theodore Graham and Jeffrey Garfinkle of Brobeck, Phlagar and Harrison LLP, who deftly put together the pieces necessary for the resumption of the symphony and guided the bankruptcy reorganization plan through the courts.

Labor Puts Honolulu Symphony Fund Drive Over the Top

A gift of \$50,000 from Unity House, Inc., a service organization of the Hawaii Teamsters and Hawaii Hotel Workers (H.E.R.E.), capped the Honolulu Symphony's recent \$1 million fund drive, allowing the symphony to eradicate its past debt and enter the 1998-99 season in the black.

Unity House is a private, nonprofit labor support organization whose mission is to support, protect, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's workers. It provides monthly child care grants, scholarships, housing assistance, a retirees' center, and other help for the workers of Hawaii. This gift by Unity House to the Honolulu Symphony affirms the symphony's role as a valuable cultural resource for the entire community. Unity House President Tony Rutledge said, "Not only is the Honolulu Symphony an important cultural treasure, it is the source of employment for many talented unionized musicians who can now remain in Hawaii."

There was a special labor motivation for the Unity House gift. Last May, the symphony began approaching the Musicians Association of Hawaii Local 677 about possibly needing to reopen their collective bargaining agreement to make next season's budget balance. The symphony had identified about \$50,000 in cuts they "might have to make" unless other revenues could be found. The Unity House gift provided those revenues, on the condition that the symphony's agreement with the musicians would be honored.

HSO Executive Director Michael Tiknis announced from the stage of the orchestra's season-opening concert on September 12, "I can't think of any orchestra in the country that has received this kind of support from the Teamsters."

The preceding orchestra reports were prepared with the help of the ICSOM delegate and/or orchestra committee of the respective orchestras. -Ed.

1998 ICSOM Conference Resolutions

Whereas, The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) has always been rooted in the concept of self-determination for symphony musicians; and

Whereas, The Symphony Musicians of Australia have been engaged in a struggle to gain self-determination; and

Whereas, That struggle has demonstrated to the musicians of Australia and the orchestral world the power of unity; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the delegates to the 1998 ICSOM Conference express their heartfelt admiration to Martin Foster and his colleagues in the Symphony Orchestra Musicians of Australia for their tenacity and courage in their fight for self-determination and union democracy.



Be it Resolved, That Article III, Section 2.(f), of the ICSOM Bylaws be amended to read as follows:

Foreign orchestras or conferences of foreign orchestras may apply for and be granted Associate status with the consent and approval of delegates to the annual ICSOM Conference. Terms and conditions for such status shall be established by the Governing Board.



Whereas, There is an inherent conflict of interest when employers serve as union officers; and

Whereas, Basic trade unionism precludes such dual roles; therefore, be it

Resolved, That a new section be added to Article IV of the ICSOM Bylaws as follows:

No officer or Member at Large of the Governing board shall (1) serve in the position of a Personnel Manager or Contractor for an employer; (2) work in any position where s/he receives any remuneration from contracting or booking musical units (other than regularly organized one of which s/he is a leader or member).



Whereas, There is an inherent conflict of interest when employers serve as union officers; and

Whereas, Basic trade unionism precludes such dual roles; therefore, be it

Resolved, That a new section be added to Article IV of the ICSOM Bylaws as follows:

No ICSOM delegate shall (1) serve in the position of a Personnel Manager or Contractor for an employer; (2) work in any position where s/he receives any remuneration from contracting or booking musical units (other than regularly organized one of which s/he is a leader or member).



Be it Resolved, That the ICSOM Chairperson be authorized to make any necessary changes in all resolutions having to do with the Final Report of the Investigative Task Force that were approved by the 1998 ICSOM Conference, with the object and intention of having the five Player Conferences agree to submit identical legislation to the 1999 AFM Convention regarding the substance of the Final Report. Any such changes must be approved by the ICSOM Governing Board.



Be it Resolved, That the 1998 ICSOM Conference directs the ICSOM Chairperson to submit legislation to the 1999 AFM Convention that will prevent any repetition of the injustice that was done to the musicians of the Symphony Nova Scotia by their Local in raising their work dues in an undemocratic and inequitable manner.



Whereas, Under the AFM Bylaws the only duly constituted legislative body is the AFM biennial Convention; and

Whereas, The only way to ensure that the interests of any group of members, including those represented by the Player Conferences, are advanced and enacted is for those members to elect delegates to the Convention who understand and share those interests; therefore, be it

Resolved, That all ICSOM delegates are urged either to run for or seek other similarly interested members to run for delegate to the 1999 AFM Biennial Convention.



Whereas, Once again this year there are a number of major orchestras in North America which are facing bargaining crises; and

Whereas, These orchestras are facing potential work stoppages; and

Whereas, Some of these work stoppages could prove disastrous to these orchestras; and

Whereas, In the spirit of trade unionism, solidarity, and collegiality, the AFM Player Conferences wish to support and encourage the musicians of these orchestras; therefore, be it

Resolved, That ICSOM express its support and encouragement to the musicians of the orchestras of San Antonio, Montreal, Kennedy Center, National Arts Centre, and the Florida Philharmonic, and further urge their managements to bargain in good faith and seek a reasonable way and means to solve their fiscal problems other than on the back of the musicians.



Whereas, The use of Electronic Media Guarantees (EMG) has been grossly abused by symphony managers; and

Whereas, EMGs are intended to be an addition to any compensation due for live services; therefore be it

Resolved, That the 1998 ICSOM Conference urges the member orchestras of ICSOM to adopt the following policy regarding Electronic Media Guarantees: 1) Work to satisfy the EMG must be done within the contracted season length; 2) EMGs shall not be negotiated to reduce previously contracted weeks of service; 3) EMGs shall be utilized for work of a symphonic nature, not for commercial work such as jingles, theatrical motion pictures, etc.; 4) Orchestras shall not redirect any part of previously negotiated scale wages into EMGs.



Whereas, The *International Musician* already has nonmember and member subscription rates; and

Whereas, Increased access to union periodicals will help educate future members and supporters of the AFM; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 1998 ICSOM Conference urge that the IEB establish a student subscription rate for the *International Musician*, to be published in the paper with the present subscription rates.



Whereas, It has come to the attention of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians that the Nevada Symphony (NSO) musicians have been locked out; and

Whereas, The major issue is the tenure of existing long-standing members of the orchestra; and

Whereas, Tenure is standard in the symphonic industry; and

Whereas, The management of the Nevada Symphony seems to be unaware that tenure for NSO musicians is well deserved; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 1998 ICSOM Conference go on record as giving its full support to the musicians of the Nevada Symphony and urge the Nevada Symphony management to grant tenure for the existing members of the orchestra immediately.



Whereas, The Delegates to the 1998 ICSOM Conference have spent a great deal of time and energy discussing the ITF proposals; and

Whereas, The strategy of how to accomplish the passage of these proposals is crucial to the success of the ITF proposals; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the ICSOM Governing Board will formulate a plan to instruct the Delegates on the appropriate specific strategies that must be carried out over the course of the coming year.



Just before the beginning of the last session of the Unity Conference, at which the ICSOM Chair ruled that new business/ motions could be considered, a very impressive delegate whose name escapes me now came to me with a proposal for a new motion which I'd already written out and cleared with the New York delegation and the President of Local 802. He therefore deferred the making of that motion to me.

That motion relates to a section of the AFM Bylaws which reads:

"For election of Officers and Delegates to the AFL/CIO Convention, each Local shall be entitled to one vote for each 100 members of or major fraction thereof. But no Local shall be entitled to more than 20 votes."

My motion involved removing that cap which, in the case of Local 802, actually succeeds in disenfranchising 8800 members of our Local. I felt that this motion was so appropriate that no problems about its adoption would occur. I was wrong. A motion to "table this motion indefinitely" came from someone on the floor. When I got up to ask why this tabling motion was made, I was informed that the capping feature of the AFM bylaw pertained to the AFL/CIO Convention.

Indeed, in rereading that bylaw, I found it to be very badly written, since it should state:

"Officers of the AFM and Delegates to the AFL/CIO Convention," and not "Officers and Delegates to the AFL/CIO Convention."

I felt that something was wrong with interpretation of this AFM bylaw as represented by the maker of the tabling motion and the ICSOM Chair. The next morning I got in touch with the Local 802 President who once more assured me that this matter indeed pertained to "Officers of the AFM" and not just to the AFL/CIO Convention.

I immediately called ICSOM Chair Robert Levine, and he, too, told me that he was aware that the AFM bylaw did pertain to "Officers of the AFM." That statement put the whole procedure taken in regard to this motion into a state that defied normal rules of credibility. The only way I've been able to put this matter into some type of credible perspective was to realize that the chair of ICSOM in particular did a mind boggling and extremely competent job during these 4 or 5 days of Conference and that this could be an explainable mistake when viewed in context to the hour and exhaustion of all and the Chair in particular.

"Untabing" this motion at this time may well be impossible, impractical or both. Recriminations about what happened are

probably a waste of time. This issue however is one which I feel cannot be forgotten. It should be pursued at Local levels, and a coalition of Locals should be formed to see that it is brought forth and passed at the very next AFM Convention along with any other program that would make the AFM a good deal more accountable to the rank-and-file of this Federation.

One of the AFM Executive Board members was told that his "constituency" was the rank-and-file of the AFM. He disagreed. He stated that his constituency was the "delegates to the AFM Convention," and he may have been right. We must ensure that those delegates represent all members of their Local and not just the first 2000.

Newton Mansfield
New York Philharmonic ICSOM Delegate

Robert Levine replies: *I agree with Mr. Mansfield on two points: that the AFM Bylaws disenfranchise the members of large locals in the election of AFM officers, and that the current AFM bylaw regarding the issue is less than crystal-clear.*

But as ICSOM chair, I am bound by ICSOM Bylaws to run our meetings according to accepted parliamentary procedure. A motion to table Mr. Mansfield's motion was made from the floor and seconded. Such a motion to table was legitimate at that point in the proceedings and was not subject to discussion, according to parliamentary practice.

It may well be that the lack of clarity in the AFM bylaw led the Conference to conclude that changing it required a fuller discussion than time and energy allowed at that point in a very long day. Certainly the action taken by the Conference was not a rejection of Mr. Mansfield's motion, nor the concept it embodied.



After a twenty-year hiatus I returned to an ICSOM Conference. It was quite an experience in so many ways.

It was noted that many of the "militants" were either violists or bassoonists of some kind. I might respectfully suggest that a study be made as to why this is so. The renewing of friendships with the likes of Jim Clute, Charlie Schlueter and Brad Buckley; the meeting of people about whom I have been hearing from our well-respected and outstanding delegate, Jay Blumenthal, made for an exceptionally interesting and enjoyable time.

I was impressed with the manner in which Robert Levine chaired the meetings. His calm and self-control were key factors in keeping confrontations to a minimum. Whenever a question of legality arose, Lennie Leibowitz gave us clear and direct statements as to what we can do and what is not acceptable.

I am appreciative of the efforts of the ITF and their recommendations. I did not agree with some of their guidelines, and was made somewhat irritable by the paternal statements of one of the members insofar as a proper place to raise children was concerned.

"Voicings" graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster (bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)

Insofar as the Symphonic Services Division of the Federation is concerned, they do excellent work. Still, I must admit that the Federation as a whole did not seem prepared to discuss the current and past problems that exist and did not present any concrete thoughts as to how to deal with these problems. It is in their and our best interests, which should be the same, to take concrete steps to get their house in order.

I felt a sense of pride in being connected with Local 802, notwithstanding the continuing and ongoing “differences” with some members of our Local 802 Executive Board. Our president, Bill Moriarity, spoke and acted in a manner that one should expect from the leading official of a major union. The members of the Conference are aware of the positive actions and forward-looking decisions of our local. This pleases me.

I can quite candidly say that there seemed to be a difference in “vibes” between many ICSOM delegates and our Canadian colleagues and ROPA delegates. Dare I say that our group seemed more “mature,” but the younger groups reminded me of the ICSOM I fondly remembered from twenty years ago. I liked the spirit of our colleagues and was thrilled to have us all together. We should do it more often.

Finally, I had a wonderful and rejuvenating time. Twenty years ago I said that I would love to have an orchestra made up of ICSOM delegates. I now expand that to include ROPA, OCSM, TMA and RMA delegates as well. I thank the Conference for allowing me to speak so freely. I wish for all of us continued growth and ever increasing involvement and leadership in all areas of our profession.

*Laurance W. Fader
New York City Ballet Orchestra*



The five AFM player conference leaders: Dennis Dreith, RMA; Robert Levine, ICSOM; Bev Spotton, OCSM; Andrew Brandt, ROPA; and Gordon Messick, TMA (photo: Dennis Molchan)

The Five AFM Player Conferences:
International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)
Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM)
Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA)
Recording Musicians Association (RMA)
Theatre Musicians Association (TMA)

One acronym that seemed to come up repeatedly in the Unity Conference “alphabet soup” was **DIDO**, meaning Dollar In, Dollar Out. As the Unity Conference progressed, several Conference participants couldn’t help but create some of their own new and novel shorthand:

LILO - Liquid In, Liquid Out (Artie Storch, editor of TMA’s *Pit Bulletin*, coined this one when the session seemed to be going very long without a break.)

DILDO - Dollars In, Less Dollars Out

FIDO - Screw It! Dollars Out

DODO - Dollars Out, Dollars Out

WINO - Welfare In, Nothing Out

EL NIÑO - Everyone Loses—Nothing In, Nothing Out



Robert Levine and Steve Young share a happy moment of “Liquid In.” (photo: Dennis Molchan)

**The distribution center
of the ICSOM CD-ROM has moved . . .**

. . . to Pittsburgh. Treasurer Stephanie Tretick has taken over production of the ICSOM CD-ROM. Each ICSOM delegate received a current CD at the Conference in August. Orders for additional copies will be accepted from ICSOM musicians, \$10 per disc, payable to ICSOM and mailed to Stephanie at 3979 Boulevard Drive, Pittsburgh PA 15217.

Newslets

Artistic license and the First Amendment: The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld a contested 1990 law under which the National Endowment for the Arts was charged to take "standards of decency" into consideration when awarding grants to artists. Arthur C. Danto writes in *The Nation*, July 1998 issue, "... history casts a shadow over the 8-to-1 majority claim by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor that the recent ruling is in effect toothless, for it does not constitute a 'realistic danger that ... it will compromise First Amendment values.' If, however, O'Connor continued, the endowment were 'to leverage its power to award subsidies on the basis of subjective criteria into a penalty on the basis of disfavored viewpoints, then we would confront a different case.' But we already confront that case. . . .

"This is a consequentialist footnote to Justice David Souter's lone dissent, his ringing observation that 'viewpoint discrimination in the exercise of public authority over expressive activity is unconstitutional.' The ruling precisely subverts the Court's mandate to uphold the First Amendment, by withholding from artistic discourse a kind of work substantial enough to occupy the Court's time. Any art that raises a question as to freedom of speech is already protected by the First Amendment. To pretend that it is not is to register a disregard for art as a vehicle for moral and political discussion. The ruling is toothless only because the Justices regard art itself as toothless. What its members require is a crash course in remedial art criticism."

All current ICSOM officers were reelected at this year's Conference: Robert Levine, Chair; David Angus, President; Lucinda-Lewis, Secretary; Stephanie Tretick, Treasurer; Marsha Schweitzer, Editor, *Senza Sordino*.

A new health and medicine TV series, *Health Diary*, will air this fall on public television stations around the country. One program in the series will feature musicians' health and **Minnesota Orchestra cellist Janet Horvath**. This program is scheduled to air in December; check your local listings for the exact date and time, or call your local public television station and refer to program #114. *Health Diary* is a production of Twin Cities Public Television (KTCA Channel 2).

At the Unity Conference over \$800 was raised to support the Teamsters For A Democratic Union Legal Education Fund and TEMPO, the AFM's political support organization.

As *Senza Sordino* went to press, the **Montreal Symphony**, an OCSM orchestra, was on strike, and the **Harrisburg (PA) Symphony**, a ROPA orchestra, was locked out. Check Orchestra-L and the ICSOM Website for news and requests for help from these and other orchestras in need of our support.

**Many Thanks
to
TOM M. HALL
(Chicago Symphony)
for
Another
Superb Job Done
as
Conference
Coordinator!**

Photos in this issue of Senza are by Dennis Molchan (RMA), as noted, or by Marsha Schweitzer. Thanks to the Recording Musicians Association for graciously sharing their excellent photographs with ICSOM.

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