

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of ICSOM. I am so pleased and honored to have been given the opportunity to address you on behalf of my father, your first Chairman, George Zazofsky. He would be so proud of your accomplishments - imagine fifty years of ICSOM and look at what you have accomplished. And when I was invited to speak to you I relished the opportunity to say happy birthday on behalf of my dad on this auspicious occasion.

But first I have to make one little correction for the record so to speak. Contrary to the Chairman's report on my father, dad did not die on April 19th, but rather as he was packing to attend this convention on August 21st, 1983. He was so excited and enthusiastic about the upcoming meeting, that his heart literally burst with pride and excitement at what was being accomplished here and the plan for the work ahead. So he never got to say "thank you" to all of his dear colleagues here at ICSOM. And I am now here to say it for him. So first of all, before I go any further, I want to say "thank you" on behalf of my father.

So first let me tell you a little bit about who my father was. He married into a remarkable family of first generation musicians - children of Russian immigrants, the Gombergs. His in-laws included Robert, a prominent violinist in the Philadelphia Orchestra with Ormandy; Celia, violin soloist under contract at NBC; Leo, principal trumpet for the Radio City Symphony; and two famous oboe players: Harold Gomberg - principal oboe of the New York Philharmonic with Lenny, and Ralph Gomberg - first oboe of the Boston Symphony. So on those occasions when these personalities got together themes arose, issues were discussed, grievances were aired. Oh, my God, there was never a quiet moment as these larger than life personalities vied to be heard. It seemed to me watching it all like a mini-orchestral conference with no Roberts Rules of Order, which by the way was one of my father's favorite books!. The excitement, the drama, the heightened

sense of urgency! It was truly a wonder to behold.

My father was assistant concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and chairman of the BSO players committee. My mother Edith, was a fine cellist who concentrated on raising a family and supporting her husband's career. She was also a renowned cook, whose invitation for her homemade Russian Borscht brought many famous and hungry musicians to our home especially after some exhilarating Saturday evening concerts - Piatagorsky, Rostropovich, even Danny Kaye! - any hungry musician was welcome!

I remember how aggressively dad and his newly formed orchestral committee confronted issues that today seem unheard of. For example, the Boston Symphony was the first orchestra in America to hire a woman - flutist Dorothy Anthony Dwyer. There were issues that needed to be addressed - for example, she was relegated to a back stage bathroom for a changing room. This sounds unheard of especially when you consider that she was a direct descendant of the most famous fighter for women's equality: Susan B. Anthony.

I remember one occasion when dad was invited to address a newly created senate committee on aid to the arts. As he reviewed his notes, waiting for his turn to be heard, a young woman came in and gave a talk about how important this funding bill was for the arts in American. And then, to the bewilderment of the panel, she began to sing - she sang "Happy Days Are Here Again," first in an upbeat tone, similar to what you'd hear at a convention. Then dramatically she stopped and rendered a second version, but this time as a painfully slow and deliberate dirge. This young singer, Barbra Streisand, was making a point about the importance of interpretation and freedom of expression. And how funding was an integral part to this entire process. Dad was awed by the demonstration. And then it was his turn

to speak. After delivering his prepared remarks, questions followed. One senator emphasized his Russian sounding name, and began with, "Mr. ZaZOFsky, what makes you orchestra musicians think you're so special that we need to pass a bill designed singularly for your needs, as opposed to others who come before this committee seeking money?" Amazingly nonplussed by this question and its delivery, my father replied: "Senator,... "Senator, when you and your friends went out after school and played tennis or other sports, I was home practicing. And senator, when you went out on weekends to a movie or some other "fun" activity, I stayed home and practiced or took lessons. Senator, you and your committee owe every musician of this country a debt of gratitude. And this bill supporting the arts must be passed." And he got up and walked out.

Now let me tell you about the "clicks". One day my father was on the phone while I was typing his scheduled report on the senate hearing. As he was about to hang up, he motioned me over, put his hand over the receiver, and whispered for me to listen. What I heard - a little twelve year old - was a "click" after his caller hung up. Wow, that was interesting, but what was it? My father then explained that someone he didn't know didn't like what he was trying to accomplish, and thus wanted to know what he was saying and doing. This "someone else" was also listening to the conversation. So we also had to be careful what we said on the phone. I didn't understand what he was saying, how such a kind and quiet person like my dad could become such a threat that someone would do such a thing. But I followed his admonitions and respected what he had said, and that this was somehow related to his desire to improve the lives of musicians. And that this sometimes meant being a little extra cautious what you said over the phone.

He talked about the three Rs: Recognition, Respect and Remuneration, for the many years of study and practice - before they even took their first audition. And he

objected to the word "play", and felt that this left people with the impression that what musicians were doing was somehow “fun” instead of the result of years of arduous work, and study.

As Chairman of the BSO Players Committee and 1st Chairman of this organization, dad was keenly aware of all the concomitant issues: proper venues, better communication with other orchestra committee chairpersons, with management, and the AFM. What an incredible list of accomplishments: establishment of a strike fund, health care, pensions, sabbaticals, *Senza Sordino*. Even the infamous conductor evaluations; later ironically enough adopted by management to aid in their conductor searches.

I'm sure you are all familiar with the working conditions that led to the creation of ICSOM. Julie Ayer's marvelous book, "More Than Meets the Ear", details the visionary founders, the difficult birth, the trials and triumphs. And how they accomplished all this was truly an amazingly story. And looking back on it now, I feel incredibly lucky to have participated in some small way as an ever ready editor, and occasionally a sounding board. I was privileged to have witnessed what you were all doing here at ICSOM. and incredibly proud of my father for his role as First Chairman. A colleague from those days recently wrote to tell me the following: "One thing above all - he was always pragmatic, conciliatory and fair. It was my pleasure and honor to have known him".

Now I'm about to sit down, ladies and gentlemen of ICSOM. But as a wise person once said: “Before you consider the future, you must understand your past.” So as you now proceed to consider the challenges ahead, I urge you to remember from whence you came and how proud you must all be at how far you have come! And finally, and most of all I want to express my deep gratitude for this opportunity on behalf my dad to finally speak to you all.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a very happy 50th birthday, and I urge you all to continue your very important and great work!! Thank you very much - and as they said in Star Wars - “may the music be always with you!”