

# Senza Sordino

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## WHO CHOOSES OUR CONDUCTORS? THE CLEVELAND STORY

At the end of the Cleveland Orchestra's 1965 Russian tour, members of the Orchestra Committee met with representatives of the Musical Arts Association (the organization operating the Orchestra) to discuss George Szell's questionable behavior on a few occasions during the tour. The subject of Dr. Szell's successor arose. The most significant statement in that regard came from Frank E. Joseph, then President of Musical Arts, and currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He said, "I would never hire a man (conductor) the Orchestra overwhelmingly rejected."

Last August, when it became apparent the choice of a conductor was imminent, he denied the statement, which is documented in Committee minutes of that meeting. Later he stated to the press that, "They only heard what they wanted to hear," but Committee members present at that 1965 meeting emphatically substantiate the records in our files.

Under the terms of our Trade Agreement, a representative was elected by the Orchestra to serve on a "Search Committee" whose function was to screen candidates for the post of Music Director. Of that seven man committee only two were musicians, the second being our Resident Conductor. The rest were four Trustees and the General Manager.

Although the list of prospects contained approximately forty names, only about six were seriously considered, or so it seemed. Our representative indicated that the man ultimately chosen was an odds-on favorite from the outset with many Search Committee members. From what we could learn, the Committee was split, and one Trustee reportedly admonished others for not heeding the educated advice of the musicians present.

The Orchestra's first concerted move came last July when the Trustees were notified that a decision to select a Conductor would be premature on such limited exposure. 99% of the players wanted to see more of the candidates. However, it soon became apparent that some Trustees and the General Manager were very eager to announce a successor to Szell. This was shortly after certain Trustees heard Lorin Maazel in Vienna. From that time on they amplified their efforts in his behalf, and we recently learned that one board member was convinced last May, long before Maazel's initial Cleveland appearance.

Immediately following the appearance of the final "prospect," the Orchestra Committee conducted a preference poll listing seven candidates. Players were requested to list their choices in order of preference. 98 ballots were cast out of 104 musicians. Two players stated that the question was not within our sphere of activity and that the choice was solely up to management. The four missing votes could be attributed to the fact that not all musicians performed that day.

Based on our limited exposure to the conductors considered last season, the results were : Kertesz 76; Abbado 15; Frubeck

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## CHICAGO TRIUMPHS AT HOME AND ABROAD

BY BERNARD JACOBSON

An old friend from my college days back in England sat next to me in Usher Hall, Edinburgh, as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra made its first appearance on European soil. After the opening item on the program, he leaned over and said: "You'd be a fool if you ever left Chicago."

The anecdote sums up, in one short phrase, exactly the message that this first foreign tour in the orchestra's distinguished 80-year-history was designed to convey. To most Europeans, Chicago for many years has meant Al Capone, and the only recent variation in the legend was the scarcely less unpleasant image of police brutality at the Democratic Convention in 1968.

It might be an exaggeration to claim that the Chicago Symphony tour changed all that in one stroke. But it would not be much of an exaggeration. Wherever the orchestra went — which is to say in Edinburgh, Ghent, Brussels, Helsinki, Göteborg, Stockholm, Frankfurt, Hannover, Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Milan, Munich, Paris, and London — the acclamation of the public and press was mingled with amazement that an ensemble second to none of the world's greatest orchestras could come from, of all places, Chicago. And it was evident at once that the city's image would never be quite the same again. While the orchestra was still in Edinburgh, the *Financial Times*, one of Britain's leading national newspapers, ran a special four-page feature devoted to Chicago. Referring to the city as the "birthplace of modern architecture" and in other similar flattering terms, the article could hardly have happened without the interest aroused by the Symphony tour.

The implications of this predictable but still gratifying success for the future status of the orchestra in its own community are obvious and crucial. The Chicago business-political establishment has suddenly discovered — to its own considerable surprise, since culture is not something it usually bothers its head about — that one six-week, 25-concert tour by a bunch of long-hair musicians can do much more to earn Chicago a position of respect in the world than years of propaganda through more conventional trade and diplomatic channels. Consciousness of the Symphony as a prestige-gatherer for the city has always hovered somewhere on the edge of the rich and powerful peoples' minds, but now the point has been rammed home beyond any ignoring or forgetting.

## "CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR"

Public recognition came swiftly. The Chicago Press Club broke with precedent by naming, not an individual, but the orchestra's conducting staff and all of its 106 members "Chicagoans of the Year" for 1971. The influential Commercial Club gave a special dinner to honor the orchestra, with music director Georg Solti among the guests and musicians, management, and governing

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## "CHICAGOANS OF THE YEAR"

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board also represented. The city itself, accustomed to honoring sportsmen rather than artists but lately starved of any big sports successes to honor, seized its opportunity to present the "largest trophy" it had ever awarded to the orchestra at a reception that followed — most incredibly of all — a full-scale civic parade of welcome. Imagine: State St. resounding to cheers, not for footballers or visiting royalty or astronauts or racetrack-stockowners, but for a hundred players of classical music!

For me, as a critic privileged to accompany the Chicago Symphony on the first three weeks of its European tour, the experience was a delight and an education. There was the opportunity to become much better acquainted with the orchestra members themselves, a varied and rewarding group of men and women. There was all the great music-making under Solti and principal guest conductor Carlo Maria Giulini. And now that we are back in Chicago, there are the urgent phone calls from people wondering if I can help them get tickets for Symphony concerts. For this season, for the first time, five out of eight series were practically sold out on subscription before the season even began.

Just occasionally, it seems, virtue meets with its due reward.

*The above article was prepared for SENZA SORDINO by Bernard Jacobson at the request of the Chicago players. Jacobson, who grew up in England and also worked in Holland came to the U.S. in 1964. He has been Music Critic of the Chicago Daily News since 1967.*

*(Editorial comment: Mr. Jacobson's article should be required reading for every board member of every symphony in the U.S., but particularly in the medium and smaller sized cities. They might begin to see their orchestras as financial as well as cultural assets. As an example, IBM opens a plant near Denver, Colorado. Not all of the sort of personnel they need will be enticed to Colorado by thoughts of skiing and trout fishing. Some will want to know about the libraries, the museums, and the Denver Symphony. One could find parallels in almost every city. It should not require a prestigious, and costly world tour to bring this fact home.*

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de Burgos 4; Barenboim 3; Maazel 2. The Orchestra gave strong "second choice" votes to Abbado, Frubeck and Haitink.

Each Trustee of the Musical Arts Association was informed of the results by telegram. The next day a press conference was held to inform the local media and wire services.

The Orchestra felt that the ticket buying public should be appraised of developments, and by involving them sufficient interest would be generated to block an appointment that seemed more and more imminent as time passed.

It was decided to notify Istvan Kertesz of the vote. He was reached at his Cologne home and was elated at the results. He said, "Unfortunately the Trustees make the final choice and they didn't even ask me if I am interested in the job. Cleveland is the only Orchestra I would leave my European career for," he continued. "I would even leave my beautiful home here and live in Cleveland."

A day later a local paper interviewed him by transatlantic phone and the story was front page. Interest ran high but a month later Mr. Kertesz obligated himself in Cologne until 1979. He had still not been contacted by the Musical Arts Association! Another call was made in the hope he would find time for two major posts. "Not possible," he said. "There aren't enough weeks in the year."

The Search Committee had its final meeting on the morning of Oct. 1st and was dissolved that day. To the best of our knowledge no vote was taken nor was any recommendation made to the Trustees at their meeting that same afternoon. Instead, the Executive Committee of the Board carried a recommendation to the Trustees. After heated discussion (we are told) about 25 of 36 Trustees present voted FOR the recommended applicant, Lorin Maazel. One can only wonder why only 36 Trustees from a roster of 62 were present when such an important decision was under consideration.

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## REPORT FROM MILWAUKEE

Early in April the Milwaukee Symphony will make its New York debut in Carnegie Hall.

For many years Milwaukee existed as a "musical suburb" of Chicago. The local orchestra languished while the Chicago Symphony made regular run-outs to Milwaukee. Finally someone realized that the answer was not to keep the Chicago Orchestra out, but rather to develop local pride in the local orchestra. Now, in some ten short years, the Milwaukee Symphony has developed to "New York Debut" stature.

Milwaukee is guaranteed more weeks than the average ICSOM orchestra and bests 13 orchestras in annual salary.

## WELCOME TO WINNIPEG

The Winnipeg Symphony, celebrating its 25th Anniversary next season, has been invited to participate in the Cheltenham Festival, Cheltenham, England, in July 1972, under the direction of its new Music Director, Pierre Gamba.

The Orchestra had first life in 1948 under Walter Kaufman who had been Director of Music for Radio Bombay, India. The orchestra was on a part-time basis, playing five to ten concerts a season. Musicians employed in Winnipeg by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in radio and television formed its nucleus.

In 1956 Kaufman left to accept a post at Indiana University and the Orchestra had guest conductors until 1958.

Victor Feldbrill, a young Canadian, became Music Director in 1958. It was then, for the first time, that a contract was offered to a nucleus of between forty and fifty musicians. That was the start of transition from part-time orchestra to what will eventually be a full-time organization providing a good living wage for its members.

In 1968 the Orchestra moved into the spanking new Centennial Concert Hall. The hall is reputed to be one of the finest acoustically in North America. Almost over-night the sound of the Orchestra improved.

At present the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation continues to augment the incomes of symphony players by employing an orchestra of approximately 50 musicians for a half hour radio broadcast every week.

In the first contract year (1958-59) the contract called for 24 weeks at \$60 per week. The 1970-71 contract is for 30 weeks at \$131. Negotiations for a new contract for 1972 will begin shortly.

Ticket sales have increased by approximately 30% in the last two years and grants from the Canada Council have been increased. With a new conductor of international reputation, the Orchestra confidently looks forward to a great surge in development both artistically and financially.

*A warm welcome to the Winnipeg Symphony.*



The cartoon above is the work of Paul Torvick of the Vancouver Symphony. Paul has served four seasons on their Orchestra Committee, the last two as Chairman. He plays horn. Perhaps the "crook" emerging from the melee is his personal warning to those who blow not to get too involved with the problems of those who bow. (Ed. When we showed Paul's "solution" to one string player the response was, "I'll buy it. I'll sit anywhere as long as I don't have that damn piccolo blowing in my ear.")

## SETTLEMENT IN SAN ANTONIO

The following information is from Leonard Leibowitz, a partner of Phil Sipser, ICSOM's legal counsel:

"The case of the discharged musicians of the San Antonio Symphony has, after an almost two year struggle, been settled out of court.

"Messrs. Danielson, Bading et al had commenced a federal court law suit against the Symphony Society and the conductor claiming unwarranted non-renewal, and against the local Union claiming a failure to represent properly.

"On Oct. 6, 1971 at a courtroom session held before Federal District Judge D. W. Suttle, all parties agreed that in exchange for approximately \$4,000 to be paid to plaintiffs, they, the plaintiffs would discontinue their suit.

"Both Danielson and Bading expressed their gratitude for all that ICSOM had done for them and Bading summed it up best when he remarked, '... they know they were in a fight.'"

*For legal reasons SENZA SORDINO offers no comment.*

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## BOB MAISEL - Secretary of ICSOM

What does the Secretary of ICSOM have in common with a sweet potato player, a tuba player, a cattle driver (Stockyards, National City, Illinois), a Chevrolet assembly line worker, a recognized painter and an accomplished symphony bassist? These very diverse people all answer to the name of Ralph Robert Maisel.

Bob's first musical instrument, presented to him as a child by an uncle, really was a sweet potato. The tuba came along in high school and after that the stints of cattle driving and the assembly line.



Maisel reports to 1971 ICSOM Conference as Chairman Mendelson listens.

Today he restricts his activities largely to painting, to his ICSOM duties, and, of course, to his true profession as a fifteen-year member of the Bass Viol section of the St. Louis Symphony.

Bob has been drawing ever since he could hold a pencil. He has taken life classes in painting at Indiana University, sold numerous paintings, had one-man exhibitions and won several honors in competitions. He is basically a surrealist but has many styles. At present he is particularly intrigued with

the use of various colored felt-tipped pens.

Although very intense in all his pursuits, ICSOM holds a special place in Bob's priorities. He became interested in forming a group of symphony musicians to further their own special interests many years before ICSOM became a reality, and is proud of the part he played in its founding. He is equally proud, and justifiably so, of his job as Secretary and takes his responsibilities to the organization very seriously. An example of his dedication is the speed with which the minutes of the Seattle Conference were prepared and sent to the member orchestras. For three weeks every leisure moment was spent transcribing the proceedings from tape recording to pen, usually at a rate of about four to five words at a time. (This painstaking work was done while Bob cared for a dear friend, Cindy, his beloved Bedlington terrier, who had just had surgery. For ten nights Bob slept on the floor with her in order to keep her inactive enough to heal.)

Bob is a person of strong contrasts. Although sometimes caustic and very critical of others, he is always even more critical of himself. Sometimes solitary and moody, he can also be gregarious and talk your head off when he is so inclined. (Thursday night after a concert, at a place across from the hall called "Big John's" is a good time for this — and it helps if you are buying!)

With his ICSOM duties piled on he chooses not to be a member of the present St. Louis Symphony Orchestra Committee. But, he has served on many previous committees in all capacities. It is a source of honest satisfaction to him to have seen many of the plans of those committees come into existence. Never too busy to give a helping hand, he has always, without imposing, given much needed advice from his storehouse of experience.

Married seventeen years to his gracious wife, Florence, who teaches English at Belleville, Ill. High School, the Maisels, although childless, usually develop an immediate rapport with the new and younger players of the orchestra. Both are intensely interested in today's youth and new players are made to "feel at home" as quickly as possible.

One may often find himself in disagreement with Bob on a given issue, but only after a thorough questioning of the issue from all angles. Bob never questions your right to believe as you do. He simply questions whether or not you really understand what

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Needless to say, there was complete coverage by all the news media. When the Orchestra Committee sensed an appointment was close, the Chairman appeared on television to urge the Trustees to consider only musical criteria. Our advice went unheeded, and in the opinion of the players, the least qualified body made the most important of all decisions.

The locker room was quiet that night except for reporters pry-into musicians' innermost thoughts. It was a sad day for many in the Cleveland musical community.

Soon thereafter, management's coverup of their deception began with a request to the Committee and personnel to stop comments to the press, lest it damage fund raising efforts and discolor our public image.

The public was notified of the appointment on Oct. 1st, and on the 5th Mr. Maazel sent a cable to the Orchestra telling them how honored he was to be called on to collaborate with them. Management asked that our reply be made at a press conference, but the Orchestra voted strongly against responding to the message in any way.

Although his appointment was disquieting to the players, there are assurances from all quarters of the membership that Mr. Maazel will receive every iota of musical and artistic cooperation this ensemble can muster. Readers may rest assured the professional integrity of the Cleveland Orchestra will remain pre-eminent in the international community of symphony orchestras.

Both the Orchestra Committee and the Orchestra at large are painfully aware of management's efforts to camouflage the deception perpetrated here. Large ads have appeared not only in local papers but out of town as well. Obviously, funds are available for such costly public relations efforts. But, from another side of their mouths, management and Trustees cry "poverty."

Perhaps the most bitter pill for the players to swallow is the fact that the final selection was made by a body of musical benefactors far less qualified to make an artistic decision than they are. We fervently hope this inequity in our profession will be rectified. Who chooses our conductors is entirely up to those of us that harbor genuine concern for our careers and the future of our art.

### THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA COMMITTEE

*It is a strange coincidence that this story should run along side that of Chicago's triumphs, for on returning from their Russian tour in 1965 it was the Cleveland Orchestra which was hailed at home, and elsewhere, as "The World's Greatest Orchestra." Now, only six years later, the artistic judgment of that Great Orchestra is ignored.*

Local 2-197, through its President Ken Farmer and by action of the Board of Directors, has agreed to underwrite one half the cost of retaining ICSOM lawyer Phil Sipser for their contract negotiations with the Symphony Society. The Orchestra is very grateful for the splendid cooperation of President Farmer and Local 2-197.

you believe and why you believe it. He makes you think for yourself, and this is his greatest value.

CARL R. SCHIEBLER, *Chairman*  
St. Louis Orchestra Committee

*Editor: Having been subjected to Bob Maisel's Socratic bent, we can only say "Amen" to the above.*