

# Senza Sordino

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## WINDS OF CHANGE

### Part I

Another "season of discontent" has rolled by. Bruised feelings have healed for the most part, and beautiful music once more fills most halls. The Symphony musician continued to seek, along with other wage earners, a weekly pay check which would keep pace with the inflationary spiral. I'm afraid that it is going to be difficult since inflation is galloping and we are trotting. In most cases accords were reached amicably; however, the unsettling news is that Dallas is still in trouble; Phoenix, likewise; San Diego musicians are in crisis and Denver was locked out. The picture is spotty and the situations referred to above are indicative of a malaise which continues to trouble the symphonic institution.

Our highest priorities as musicians, of course, remain the pursuit of professional excellence and a continuing concern for our role as breadwinners. As constant participants at the bargaining table I believe that we have gained the maturity to reflect with wisdom upon the trends which are shaping our profession and future. It behooves us, therefore, to deliberate the results of various art related studies made recently. In one case, the Ford Foundation report, an attempt was made to measure the financial well-being of the symphony orchestras of the country, and in another, a survey of public opinion entitled *Americans and the Arts*, some edifying facts and opinions expressed by a broad section of the American public concerning support for the arts and the artist, are brought to light. To become enlightened in these areas is imperative, for there is no question that the musician, with much to gain or lose, will remain fully involved, like it or not, in probing for the answers to the pressing profession related problems of the moment. Last year the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's paycheck was decimated. In Dallas today, present and future livelihoods are at stake. Our joint concern is necessary for the bell may toll for any of us at any time.

The recent Ford Foundation report states that in 1970-71 the earnings gap of all symphony orchestras was \$62 million dollars. "Earnings Gap" is the term used to indicate the bottom line figure after income is subtracted from an orchestra's operating expenses. It is possible that this gap could grow, aided by inflation, to \$335 million dollars by the 1980-81 season. While it is assumed, optimistically, that funds other than private will cover \$171 million out of the \$335 million dollars, this still leaves \$164 million dollars to be raised in 1980-81 where only \$36 million was needed in 1970-71. Others, not so optimistic, claim that other community priorities may result in private contributions as low as \$93 million dollars so that a whopping \$242 million instead of \$164 million will have to be raised to fill the earnings gap. At the present time private funding is providing 58% of the non-earned income (income not earned by ticket sales, etc.). Funding of the remaining 42%, \$26 million, was divided equally among several National Foundations on the one hand and public agencies on all government levels on the other. It will be a major challenge for private patrons, foundations, corporations and government to raise even more in the ensuing years if only to maintain the 1970-71 financial position. The Ford Foundation has already announced probable future reductions in its contributions to the arts.

The report, it seems, adds up to "grave trouble for the Arts" according to Mr. David Rockefeller, a founder of the Business Committee for the Arts, Inc. At a meeting of 100 major corporation representatives, recently, Mr. Rockefeller told the group that

corporations must go "beyond philanthropy in aiding the Arts in becoming self-sufficient." He suggested that the Arts transform its economic base to better deal with the earnings gap and that business expand budget and accounting assistance to nonprofit groups; use advertising and public relations skills to help Arts audiences increase, and to help create a sounder, less inflation-prone economic footing. How? Among other things, with tighter financial controls and *sophisticated labor relation techniques*.

These are tired phrases. They are half measures, at best, and the phrase *sophisticated labor relations* has offensive implications. If the Ford Foundation report is valid, the measures prescribed by Mr. Rockefeller do not begin to deal with the very serious funding problems which are projected. Most of the suggestions should have been standard practice long ago. *Sophisticated labor relation techniques* is not what is solving Dallas orchestra problems at the present time and was how the Kansas City board of trustees solved its "musician problem" in the 1960's. Sophisticated budget-saving remedies will do for tidying up the books a bit but it will take a major funding breakthrough to meet the crisis head on. Orchestra managers would gladly trade the accounting expertise offered for increased corporate philanthropy.

The National Endowment for the Arts as yet cannot be relied upon to provide the funds to take up the slack. In 1972 the N.E.A. grant to each of the twenty-one symphony orchestras with the highest budgets was \$100,000. Only the National Symphony Orchestra received more (\$200,000). The Utah Symphony Orchestra received the same sum as the Philadelphia Orchestra. I make no reference to prestige, but merely point to a system of financial distribution that is almost devoid of criteria. Obviously the N.E.A. fails to weigh an orchestra's yearly deficit, amount of non-earned income raised through community support, or other criteria which might position an orchestra for extra help. The twenty-one orchestras are merely treated as a category. In the long run we may be dealing in semantics for meaningful government support may come too late for many orchestras. The thought is a morbid one in view of the fact that the latest Canadian Council report (1972-73) shows that government sources in that country, i.e., federal, provincial and municipal, contributed 35% of the operating expenses of 29 Canadian performing arts organizations. In 1970-71 government aid from all sources accounted for only 5.7% of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra's operating expenses; 12% of the Cincinnati Symphony's expenses; 19.9% of the Buffalo Philharmonic's expenses; 22.5% of the Utah Symphony's expenses and 21.3% of the Albuquerque Symphony's expenses.<sup>1</sup> The orchestras have been listed in order of their operating budgets. What is obvious is that no U.S. orchestra comes close to receiving government aid to the extent that the Canadian government provides, that is, 35% of the orchestra operating budget.

If local private patrons and corporations, whom the Ford Foundation report says "will continue to be the principal supporters of the Arts", are to be taken at their word that the well is running dry: if foundations continue their present inclination to pull away from the Arts;<sup>2</sup> if government support on all levels is not dramatically increased and funds projected where they are needed, what can happen, as the report warns, is that we shall see the demise of many fine symphony orchestras throughout the nation. It is questionable if musicians in major symphony orches-

tras will be willing to return to shorter seasons and rely on pumping gas again in order to subsist.

We are told at the bargaining table that the winds of change are blowing and that musicians must be receptive to new ideas in order to save our livelihoods. These winds are changing for the forces that have been steering the ship as well. If suspicion has resulted in the slow acceptance of change on the part of musicians, certainly there has been great resistance on the part of symphony governing boards to include in their policy making the voice of the community at large. It was the fear of interference (and "creeping socialism") which caused the trustees of major orchestras to drag their feet throughout the sixties, denying support for establishment of a National Foundation for the Arts. The distinguished critic, Virgil Thomson, is quoted to have said:

"The civically supported symphony orchestra is the most conservative institution in the Western world. Churches and even banks are more open to experiment and the universities are daring by comparison. The symphony orchestras in the U.S. and Europe too, have been so unbesieged by the forces of change that their trustees and artistic directors are a trace troubled about themselves. When they are not savoring their good fortune they can be visited by suspicions that they are obsolescent. The notion commands wide unacceptance and small pockets of assent."

Perhaps the answer to the symphony orchestra's financial woes lies in a reasonable per capita voluntary contribution. The inclusion of the man in the street in Arts funding brings up logically the justification of his voice in policymaking. Reaction to interference being what it is, would local symphony boards resist and would present private patrons abdicate support to any significant degree?

The subject of a per capita voluntary contribution was discussed at the last ICSOM Conference. It is policy which ICSOM delegates indicated they wished to expend some energy to promote. This being the case, a penetrating analysis of the recent public opinion survey, *Americans and the Arts*, alluded to earlier, is in order and will be the topic for editorializing in the next issue of *Senza Sordino*.

<sup>1</sup>Philip Hart, *Orpheus in the New World*.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Millsaps and Editors of the Washington International News Letter, *Private Foundations and Business Corporations Active in Arts/Humanities/Education, Vol. II*.

## DALLAS SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION, MUSICIANS SETTLE PAST WAGE ISSUE

On November 27, the Dallas Symphony Association and the DSO Players' Committee resolved the issue of unpaid wages of the musicians for the 1973-74 season.

Eleven weeks of wages were still in dispute, and a court appointed arbitrator established the guide lines by which the symphony management and musicians settled their differences on the matter this week. Payments will cover all disputed amounts, including the cancelled summer season.

Instrumental in effecting the settlement was newly appointed President-General Manager of the DSO, Lloyd H. Haldeman, former general manager of the Cincinnati Symphony from 1963-1971.

The musicians of the DSO want to express appreciation to member orchestras who lent financial and moral aid during this period when back wages were being disputed. Thanks to Cleveland for \$450 given to ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund, New Orleans Symphony for \$650 and \$1,000 in escrow from the Houston Symphony.

In mid-November Local No. 147 A. F. of M. proclaimed that all back wages of DSO musicians should be settled before further negotiations for the 74/75 season could proceed. A negotiating meeting is scheduled for the first week in December.

Merle Clayton  
Dallas Symphony Orchestra

## FROM THE EDITOR:

The last issue of *Senza Sordino* carried one sentence acknowledging the end of Ralph Mendelson's tenure as Chairman of ICSOM. This, of course, is inadequate comment. His decision not to seek re-election to the post was a personal one. Those who attend ICSOM conferences are especially aware of the great responsibilities which accompany the chairmanship of the organization. Those who accept its burdens do so with a desire to serve and with little reward except a sense of accomplishment.



Ralph Mendelson

Ralph Mendelson, as Chairman of ICSOM since 1970, served us well. His record is one of unselfish dedication. He lent dignity to his post. His obvious ability gained him everyone's respect. All of us owe him our gratitude and, as we expressed at our last conference table, the desire that he continue to serve ICSOM in whatever form seems appropriate and acceptable to him.

Vance Beach, former editor of *Senza Sordino* and presently secretary of Local #47, Los Angeles, writes:

"There are individuals who have contributed vast sums of money to the symphony orchestras of our communities, but more than money is sometimes required. When the history of the American Symphony Orchestra over the past twenty years is written, the name of Ralph Mendelson should be at the top of the list of contributors".

## MONTREAL WORKING UNDER ONE YEAR AGREEMENT

The Montreal Symphony Orchestra is presently working under a one year contract. Minimum wage for the 1974-75 season is \$270 per week, an increase of \$25 over last year's minimum of \$245. Also negotiated was an across the board bonus package of \$10 per week which will be payable in two installments. Everyone including new members will be paid the bonus. There was no increase in weeks of work which remains at 46. An additional week of vacation was won. The vacation clause will now read: 4 weeks vacation—1 to 4 years of service; 5 weeks vacation—5 to 14 years of service; 6 weeks vacation—15 years or more of service.

Christy Slater  
Montreal Symphony Orchestra

## CLEVELAND MUSICIANS SAY, "It was as much as one could bare!"

The Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, playing its final concert at the Hollywood Bowl on its recent West Coast swing, had just finished the overture when it happened. Mr. Maazel stood in the wings about to walk on stage when, to the amazement of all, out ran five naked "kooks," paper bags over their heads with clothes in hand. Only one succeeded in the dash across stage. The other four, perhaps confused by the bags, wound up groping aimlessly among the seated musicians. One streaker stopped near the piano, where we are told, Cleveland's lovely orchestra pianist "almost went into cardiac arrest!"

Even with an orchestra as talented as our colleagues from Cleveland it's a hard act to follow. The incident ended with the spotlight engineer inquiring of the stage manager via walkie-talkie, "Can you tell if any of them are Jewish?"

## NORTH CAROLINA ACCEPTS THREE YEAR AGREEMENT

Shortly after midnight on Saturday, October 19, 1974, the members of the North Carolina Symphony voted 64-2 to accept a new three-year contract. This settlement came after two weeks of "play and talk" and less than twenty-four hours before we were to go on strike.

Our new contract is for three years and contains the following items:

	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Weeks	33	36	40
Scale	\$220	\$240	\$265
Yearly salary	\$7,260	\$8,640	\$10,600
Across board	15%	\$20	\$25
Per diem	\$11	\$13	\$15

An important item in the package is the institution of seniority pay. A musician will receive \$1 a week for each year of service after the third year with a limit of \$10 a week maximum. Thus, a musician beginning his fourth year would receive an extra \$4 a week. This is more a matter of respect and recognition of a musician's service than a monetary issue. Numerous first year musicians were being paid far more than many tenured players in previous years.

Principal players were clarified and guaranteed a minimum of \$25 a week over scale.

Assistant principals were defined and guaranteed a minimum of \$10 a week over scale.

The Society agreed to provide Blue Cross Major Medical coverage for the entire year and to pay the total cost of an individual's premium. Previously they paid only \$70 a year.

Other improvements included establishment of maximum hours of travel tied to the number of services per day and limitations on early departures.

We were able to institute both an Artistic Advisory Committee and a Travel Committee to provide musicians' input towards these vital areas.

Probably the greatest achievement of this difficult period was the creation of respect and awareness for the Symphony and its individual members on a state wide scale. During our "play and talk" period we corresponded with all of the Trustees and the State Legislators, talked with many of them personally and received excellent publicity culminating with an editorial supporting our demands the morning of our last negotiation session.

We feel that the sense of solidarity and pride we have discovered is a direct result of the inspiration of Len Leibowitz. These contract negotiations were the first time we had employed counsel and he was invaluable.

Much thanks also is due to Charles Thomas, President of Local 500 AFofM and to Russ Olson, the Secretary Treasurer. Orchestra negotiators were John McClellan and Gregory Cox.

With our season length at 40 weeks in the 3rd year we at last feel as if we are in the mainstream of other ICSOM orchestras and we are pleased and optimistic about our future.

Gregory A. Cox  
North Carolina Symphony  
ICSOM Representative

Those orchestra members who so desire, may make contributions to:

THE DAVID SMILEY MEMORIAL EDUCATION FUND  
c/o Dr. Gordon Tomkins  
5 Eugene St.  
Mill Valley, Calif. 94941

## NATIONAL ORCHESTRAL ASSOCIATION SEEKS ALUMNI

Under Music Director, Leon Barzin, the National Orchestral Association is now in its 44th season of providing the finest orchestral training to young professional players. Hundreds of you benefited from this training in your early careers. The NOA Alumni Association is very interested in knowing where you are now and what you are doing. You, in turn, may be interested in the many programs the NOA is involved in today.

Please send information to:

The National Orchestral Association  
111 West 57th Street—Room 1500  
New York, N.Y. 10025  
Att: Mrs. O'Sullivan

## TO PLAY OR NOT TO PLAY

The above photo appeared in newspapers throughout the country. No, Oscar Fernandez, violinist with the Cincinnati Symphony is not praying. He is merely trying to keep warm while awaiting a "play or not" decision on an unseasonably cool September day. The temperature had dropped to 62 degrees and a brisk wind had dropped the chill factor to 52 degrees according to the local weather report. The noon open air concert was cancelled.



The extension of orchestra seasons into the summer months has made the outdoor concert both necessary and desirable. The implementation of the orchestra in this way, of course, serves a real function in providing a healthy community activity. Services are used up constructively and funding is relatively easy to come by. But concomitant with providing such concerts are weather hazards which symphony orchestra musicians and instruments were never meant to endure. Unfortunately, the advent of inclement weather forces decisions which have been the focal point of too much musician-management confrontation. The amount of story-telling in this area at our recent ICSOM conference was astounding.

Where performance shells are not part of the concert site, covered protection for all musicians should be imperative and budget provision for such protection given highest priority by orchestra managements programming outside concerts during the summer. Concert audiences, like sport event patrons, seem willing to endure inconveniences once activities commence. An umbrella or even a newspaper will suffice for most, barring a deluge. However, a poor job is being done in many communities in educating the public to accept the fact that symphony musicians and the vulnerable "tools of their trade" aren't football players and footballs and that they cannot and should not endure the risks of performing in inclement weather.

In too many cases managements have been slower than audiences to understand this and have abandoned their musicians to resultant bad press which has accompanied the obvious willingness of the conductor to subject his baton to the elements while musicians scurry to cover their lifetime investments. Here, the necessity to fall back on the letter of the contract should never have to happen. Unfortunately, the insistence of weather and temperature clauses in a preponderance of contracts speaks for itself.

## DENVER SYMPHONY LOCKED OUT

Denver Symphony musicians voted unanimously on October 2 to accept a contract settlement following a two-week work stoppage precipitated by the Symphony Association's adamant refusal to bargain its position from an early September proposal of across-the-board raises, length of season and length of contract year. A settlement made by negotiators on September 22, which included a guarantee for musicians to go back to work immediately, was negated by the Symphony Board of Trustees. Musicians arrived at the rehearsal hall to find the doors literally and classically locked. Although the musicians had voted not to accept the early September Symphony proposal, they offered repeatedly to have all or any issues settled by binding arbitration. That offer to arbitrate was rejected with these words: "The Association Board of Trustees had voted unanimously that binding arbitration could not be allowed due to the possible financial ramifications that could result if negotiation control passes from the Board's jurisdiction." The musicians offered to go back to work under conditions negotiated across the table on September 22 and to continue negotiating. Again, rejection. Finally the musicians offered to go back to work under the terms of the Symphony's early September proposal and to negotiate from that point. Rejection. Federal mediation had not brought us closer to a settlement because of the Association's obdurate position that they could not afford to offer one penny more to musicians and that their negotiating team had been given "specific instructions from the outset" that "anything proposed or demanded by the Union in excess of this authorization had to be authorized by the Trustees." The choking conditions set by the Board of Trustees on its own negotiating team had rendered that team impotent and had produced a foreclosure on the collective bargaining procedure itself. The Musicians' Union called, publicly, for the resignation of the Board of Trustees.

At the onset of the lockout on September 23, the Union had filed a \$50,000 damage suit in U.S. District Court in which a restraining order was sought to stop the alleged lockout. The U.S. District Court Judge, in private sessions, urged compromise and the parties were finally able to negotiate a settlement which reflects the musician's need for an increment towards a living wage and the Symphony's fear of fiscal insolvency.

	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Minimum Wage .....	\$260	\$280	\$300
Across the Board .....	\$15	\$20	\$20
Weeks .....	42	44	46
	(incl. 10 summer		
Vacation .....	3 weeks	3	4
	(incl. 1 rotating) (1 rotating) (1 rotating)		
Meal Allowance increase to .....	\$12.50	\$13.75	\$15.50
Room Allowance increase to .....	\$13.00	\$16.00	\$19.00
	or to half the cost of double room, whichever is greater.		
Personal leave with pay (new contract clause) .....	3 days	3 days	3 days
Optional leave without pay (new contract clause) .....	0 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks
Instrument allowance to help defray cost of repair and upkeep (new contract clause) .....	\$00 per year	\$20 per year	\$25 per year
Pension (currently non-contributory) increase of 1% in first and second year of contract to .....	6% of gross annual wage	7%	7%
Five day weeks .....	20 weeks	23	28

Artistic Advisory Committee (new contract clause)  
5 elected musicians, 3 Trustees, Music Director, to consider wide range of subjects. If subject involves fiscal conditions, Committee will include management representative.

Sabbatical Leave: to be studied by Artistic Advisory Committee, Trustees, and Music Director; under advisement for next contract.

Musicians agree to give 30-minute grace period for Red Rocks concerts (outdoor amphitheatre in mountains with extremely changeable weather conditions) and same grace period for 5 summer outdoor concerts elsewhere, in case of inclement weather.

Health coverage: Blue Cross, Blue Shield, full family coverage, preferred 120, plus supplemental benefit, \$25,000 lifetime, or the equivalent contract cost of same if change of carrier is requested by musicians.

Melanie Burrell  
Denver Symphony Orchestra

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