

# Senza Sordino

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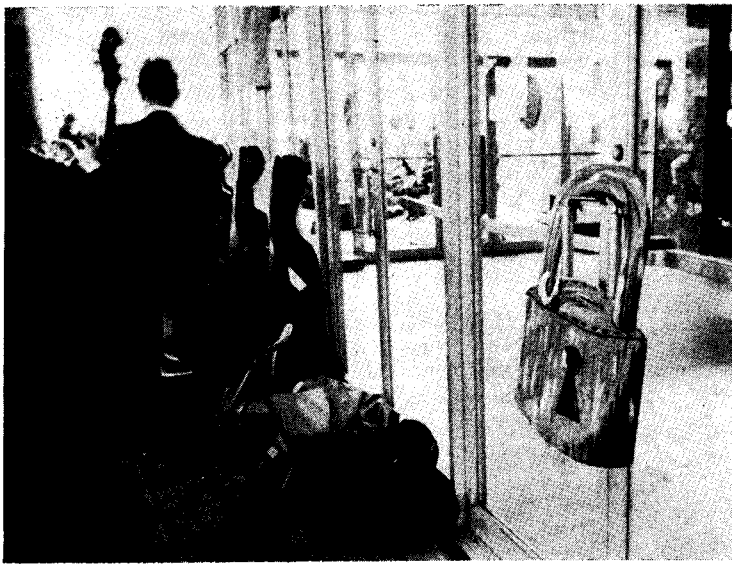


NOVEMBER 1975—NO. 2

## NEGOTIATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY LOCK-OUTS, STRIKES, TURMOIL

### DETROIT PLAYS LOCK-OUT CONCERT

After rejecting management's final offer of September 24th during a two-week extension of the 1972-75 contract, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra was locked-out of Ford Auditorium on September 30th, beginning what has become the longest work-stoppage in our history. The orchestra had voted late September 29th to further extend the old contract on a day-to-day basis. Management, however, responded to our offer to continue playing by unilaterally cancelling all concerts "until further notice." This action was



(Photo by Larry Waldrop)

but the culmination of a bitter negotiations which has had as its recurring themes procrastination, arrogance and apathy on the part of management.

The day after the cancellation, the orchestra played a lock-out concert at the front doors of Ford Auditorium (see photo). Since that time, we have played six more concerts, including two very successful benefit concerts which the orchestra independently sponsored and promoted. On October 29, we made a ninety-mile run-out to Lansing, the state capitol, where we played for state legislators. The entire orchestra played these concerts and all of them have received excellent coverage from Detroit media.

For nearly a month, management refused to negotiate while publically announcing that it was the musicians who were stalling. Finally, after a scheduled eastern U.S. tour had been capsized, management agreed to resume negotiations on October 31st and November 1st. Our optimism over the reopening of talks was soon destroyed when we found that a \$10 raise over their last offer—a raise which would bring third-year wages to \$385—was accompanied with the stipulation that the musicians drop two major job security demands. (Job security has been a crucial issue here

since last season, when management unsuccessfully attempted firings of two veteran musicians.)

On November 1st, in the fifth week out, with no future talks scheduled and in spite of doomsday threats from management, the orchestra voted unanimously to reject this "final, final" offer. This vote produced the impasse at which we stand at the time of this writing.

Throughout these weeks of oppression, our most prized possession has been the inspiring unity of the orchestra. It is upon this that we base our hope for a successful conclusion to this confrontation.

We should like to express our thanks and deepest gratitude to Mitch Miller, who came to Detroit to conduct one of our benefit concerts and to campaign on our behalf; to Leonard Leibowitz, whose legal counsel and expertise have been of inestimable value; to the many ICSOM orchestras who have encouraged us and morally sustained us by their communications; and, in Detroit, to Valter Poole and Merle Alvey, respectively a fine conductor and a dedicated Union president (Local No. 5, A. F. of M.), who have both nobly come to our aid.

*The Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
Negotiating Committee*

### MET SETTLEMENT DEFERRED UNTIL FIRST OF YEAR

The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra has been locked in a battle to obtain a fair labor agreement. Our contract ended in August. For months the management stalled until they produced their initial proposal. It contained a 10% cut; a cut of one week vacation; a one year contract proposal, and finally, free Sunday performances and the right to use recordings of our broadcasts for fund raising purposes. The orchestra unanimously turned this proposal down.

After a long period of time the management responded with a second offer which was identical to the first with the exception that the 10% cut was rescinded. Again the orchestra rejected the offer and countered with a proposal; no cut in the number of pay checks, a cost of living increase of 5% and improvements in working conditions and pension.

Before our three week pre-season rehearsal period, the orchestra authorized its committee to call a strike when it deemed the time to be opportune. Meanwhile, AGMA had signed management terms. Management then restored the fifth week of vacation and advised us that they were in the midst of a thorough analysis and revision of their financial situation, and asked for a no-strike pledge until December 31st, the middle of the season. The orchestra accepted this proposal.

Last year we had 51 weeks of work. The management now guarantees us 44 weeks. They feel that it is more profitable to cut the New York season and to rent the house to the Hurok organization. This means more weeks of touring or less weeks of work, or both. There are still many problems to be resolved.

Harold Elitzik  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

# ORCHESTRA AUDITION SURVEY

By Crawford Best

At the 1974 ICSOM conference, I volunteered to report to the 1975 conference on audition committees and their use in ICSOM orchestras. With some help from Fredrick Koennig, sociologist at Tulane University, a questionnaire was prepared and sent to 1974 ICSOM delegates. This questionnaire is reproduced below, with the number of responses to each question indicated, followed by comments on significant responses.

In addition, Irving Segall suggested that I investigate several criticisms of orchestra auditions he had heard. I did so before the conference by discussing these matters with interested players from several orchestras. Chief among these problems was the large amount of time and expense incurred by auditionees. Several sources suggested some form of regional auditions at which an auditionee could play for more than one orchestra. This idea was discussed rather thoroughly at the 1975 conference. Delegates were strongly opposed to the idea for a variety of reasons.

In addition, ICSOM counsel and various players provided copies of the audition sections of many contracts which I studied for useful conclusions. I found a complex, varied, and somewhat bewildering set of prescriptions for committees and procedures. The only pattern of any consequence I noted was that many committees defined in contracts are small in size and specified so as to insure the influence of management and/or the music director on the makeup of the committee.

## QUESTIONNAIRE (abbreviated)

1. Approximately what percentage of positions to be filled in your orchestra are filled through auditions before an audition committee?  
a. less than 25%; b. 25% to 50%; c. 50% to 75%; d. 75% to 100%

Response: a. 2; b. 0; c. 3; d. 20

2. Do you feel the use of audition committees in your orchestra has significantly increased the chances of getting a better player for the position?  
a. yes; b. probably; c. probably not; d. don't know; e. no

Response: a. 13; b. 9; c. 0; e. 1

3. What evidence do you cite for your answer to question #2? (Circle more than one of the following answers if more than one is relevant).  
a. your own evaluation of successful auditionees as compared to players chosen by other methods  
b. the record of successful auditionees in achieving tenure.  
c. no specific evidence—general impression only.  
d. other evidence (specify what evidence)

Response: a. 17; b. 9; c. 4; d. 6. In response to 3 (d) Boston mentioned as "other evidence" the "quality of performance and record of advancement (strings)". Denver mentioned the "record of successful auditionees in getting jobs outside the orchestra".

4. What aspects of your audition committee MAKE-UP do you find most useful? Least useful? Worthy of mention for other reason?

Response: Delegates' answers showed a clearcut desire for the following: a. a large committee; b. a committee from the general section for which players were auditioning, (strings, w.w., brass, perc.); c. the inclusion of a significant number of non-principals.

5. What aspect(s) of your audition committee PROCEDURES do you find most useful? least useful? worthy of mention for other reasons?

Response: Two desires stood out: a. for the committee to make the final decision, and b. the use of screens for preliminaries. Several respondents wanted a screen for finals.

6. Is there any other aspect of your selection of new players not covered by questions 4 and 5 (i.e. COMMITTEE MAKE-UP and PROCEDURES) which you think deserves comment? Examples: advertising for the job, participation of the music director, etc. Answer in the same categories as in #4 and #5.

Response: The answers were quite varied, except for five delegates who mentioned their orchestra's poor advertising, and three delegates who stressed that their auditions were quite open and fair.

7. Do you see any significant patterns in the playing of musicians picked by audition committees in your orchestra, as compared to the playing of musicians in your orchestra picked by other means? (circle one)  
a. yes; b. probably; c. don't know; d. probably not; e. no

Response: a. 7; b. 4; c. 6; d. 1; e. 5

8. Are there *important* aspects of your committee MAKE-UP or PROCEDURES which are *not specified* in your contract?  
a. yes b. no.

If your answer was "yes", please specify what these items are, why they are not in the contract, whether it would be better if they were in the contract, what impact they have on auditions, etc.

Response: a. 9; b. 1

9. What do you think are the most important improvements which could be made in your orchestra's committee(s) MAKE-UP, PROCEDURES, and OTHER ASPECTS as given in question #6?

Responses: Biggest improvements mentioned: (a) Have committee make final decision (12 delegates); (b) Use of Screens (5 delegates); (c) Larger committee (2 delegates); (d) More non-principals (2 delegates).

10. Do you think that the answers to the above 9 questions would have been significantly different if they had been made by players from a section of your orchestra other than the one you play in? a. yes; b. probably; c. don't know; d. probably not; e. no

Response: a. 0; b. 3; c. 0; d. 9; e. 10

11. Please rate the following factors in order of their importance in obtaining the best players for openings in *your* orchestra.  
a. audition committee make-up, procedures, etc.  
b. salary for the particular position.  
c. reputation of the orchestra.  
d. city in which the orchestra is located.  
e. outside work available.  
f. other factors (specify)

Response: There was a general tendency for smaller orchestras to rate highly the relative importance of factor (a), and for the larger orchestra to rate it relatively lower. Delegates generally rated (b) as most important, (c) almost as important as (b), (d) less important and (e) noticeably less important. Suggestions for (f) showed little pattern except that a number of delegates said that the mere availability of a job was a very important factor!

## KANSAS CITY PHILHARMONIC ON STRIKE

The Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra played and talked for 7 weeks. It was playing under the provisions of the 74-75 contract. Economically that contract provided for 38 weeks at \$210 per week. This provided a scale annual wage of \$7,980.

The following is a history of negotiations to date:

January—The Union requested a negotiating session with the Association. The Association refused.

June—The Union proposed their initial offer of 52 weeks at \$270 per week. This offer was made to protect the unemployment status of the musicians, as they have had their claim challenged in the past. The Association made no offer but gave the Union a financial statement and promised an audit of their books.

July—The Association made their first offer which was a two year proposal. The first year provided for 32 weeks at \$215, a scale wage of \$6880 or a decrease of 13%. The second year would include 32 weeks at \$220. The Association had an option to increase the season both years to 35 weeks.

August—The Association proposed that the Orchestra play and talk until December 31 or the Association would cancel the season. The Union agreed to play without a contract through the Lyric Opera season (October 24). The Association delivered a second ultimatum that the orchestra would have to play until December 1 or the season would be cancelled. The Union would not agree. The Association insisted the Orchestra play until November 20. The Union refused. An agreement was reached that the Orchestra would play until November 7 as long as good faith negotiations were taking place. This November 7th date guaranteed the Association that the Orchestra would play the opening subscription series (November 4 and 5).

September—The Association promised they would make a new offer by October 1.

October 1—No offer was made. A new promise of an offer by October 8 was made by the Association.

October 8—No offer was made by the Association.

October 9—The Union took a strike vote for November 4. The Orchestra believed the Association was not bargaining in good faith. The secret ballot was unanimous. The Association offered 33 weeks at \$215 (\$7,095 or a decrease of 11%).

October 29—Father Leo Brown was present at the request of the Association. The Association still did not have the audit they promised in June. The Association offered 28 weeks at \$215, or \$6,020 or a decrease of 24%. The Union proposed 38 weeks at an 8-10% increase in wages. The Association was asked what had happened to their most recent offer of 33 weeks. They replied that they were not bound by the offer since it was made under duress.

October 30—The Union called a press conference in which the negotiating committee asked for the resignation of the President of the Association and the few willful men who were attempting to deprive Kansas City of its symphony orchestra. The Union filed suit with the National Labor Relations Board contending that the Association had not been bargaining in good faith.

November 3—The Association offered 28 weeks at \$220 or \$220 retroactive to September 12 if the Orchestra would play without a contract until December 20th. The 28 week offer financially meant \$6,160 or a decrease of 23%. A third offer was to submit the entire situation to Father Brown for "fact finding" if the musicians would agree to play and talk until December 20. The Orchestra rejected the offers unanimously when no one moved their acceptance.

November 4—At the dress rehearsal for the opening concert the musicians were asked to listen to three board members. After the board's presentation the Orchestra held a meeting and voted on the proposals. The economic proposal was rejected 74-3. The fact finding proposal was rejected 67-10. The Musicians went on

strike at 12:30 P.M. The Musicians performed a substitute free concert.

In retaliation for not playing the opening subscription concert, the Association did not pay us for the last five services preceding the strike. Two more free concerts are being played on November 14th and 21st. All six Brandenburg Concerti are being performed.

Publicity has been excellent.

(Report as of November 11th)

Phillip Wachowski

Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra Committee

## DEATH OF AN ORCHESTRA New Jersey Signs

This season's New Jersey Symphony Orchestra contract, offered to the musicians on Wednesday, October 29, 1975 and ratified on October 31 by a vote of 38 to 33, has completely destroyed the moral fiber of the orchestra. By management's pitting musician against musician, they have succeeded in gathering back an orchestra, but losing the soul of music for the people of New Jersey.

When asked to ratify the contract, each musician had to decide independently whether to return to work without his fellow musician and friend, or to give up the long sought-after struggle for survival of a truly professional orchestra, and seek work elsewhere.

Management's contract offer had no provision for allowing five, illegally fired, tenured musicians, and leaders of the orchestra, back to their long-held positions. This was management's "divide and conquer" plan used to overcome an already tired and deprived orchestra. The operation was quick and successful, but the patient died.

The contract has certain provisions—a little more pay, some additional benefits, but conditions and morale are much worse. The musicians' lives will be made even more difficult by unmanageable and often unsafe conditions.

The orchestra is not only left this season to vegetate and stagnate, but also with the dreams of what could have been—music on a high level of excellence, esprit de corps among the musicians, and a chance for New Jersey to have a cultural institution of which to be truly proud—the "Great New Jersey Symphony Orchestra"!

Shattered dreams—all that remains now is a shadow of what was—disenchanted young musicians, bitter older players—all the fine musicians are gone, all the music that was is gone. Left is a symphony without a soul, a musical wasteland, a withered cultural institution.

**BE PROUD, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, AND HENRY LEWIS, YOU HAVE ACHIEVED YOUR GOAL—THE DEATH OF AN ORCHESTRA!**

John Moses

New Jersey Orchestra Committee

*Data in the new contract may be obtained by writing John Moses, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Newark, N. J.*

## FROM THE EDITOR

1975 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Johann Strauss, Jr. and throughout the land there have been programs planned in celebration. That the Strauss family had a way with a tune and is beloved around the world is undeniable but, with apologies to "Straussophiles", the prospect for second violinists (and violists) seems rather grim this year for they are doomed to full concerts, let alone rehearsals, of afterbeats.

Perhaps transference to fantasy is a natural reaction during these rather bleak playing periods, so it was not surprising that I found myself wondering how Johann, Jr.'s second violinists might have fared night after night; month after month. Surely, upon occasion one might be found hanging in some corner simply unable to cope, you know. Had Freud been alive he possibly might have had some erudite observation that would explain such an unfortunate demise, or perhaps, with a shrug simply have covered the incident with—"the guy was just OOM-PAH-PAHed to death.

I came out of it long enough to hear the word OVERTIME! A hurried after rehearsal survey of my second violin and viola playing colleagues substantiated what I had already suspected. Rigor mortis can set in BEFORE death.

## BALTIMORE ORCHESTRA REACHES AGREEMENT

At a meeting held on September 15th, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra musicians voted to accept the first year of a three-year package presented by the management and sent the committee back to renegotiate the second and third years. The entire package missed passage by only two votes. That fact hardly presented the committee with a strong mandate with which to confront the bargaining team on the other side of the table, and offered little encouragement for any dramatic gains.

Essentially, the rejected contract promised salary increases of \$15., \$15., and \$20. over the existing minimum of \$250. a week. But these increases were offered as a \$10. increase at the beginning of each season with the remainder to be added on January 1st of each year. The Association offered one additional week in the third year of the agreement to make a 45 week season.

We went back to work on September 16th and continued to try to come to terms with the issues of years two and three. A dead-

line of October 8th was given for the submission of a new offer to the musicians. The succession of days inevitably passed and we were coming close to our deadline. At this point a Federal mediator entered the picture and began his task of urging each side to give a little in order to reach an agreement. On October 8th a new offer was brought before the orchestra. Essentially, the orchestra negotiating committee managed to get the money offers in the second and third years moved up to the beginning of each season. Also the additional week was moved up to the second year. This offer was accepted by the orchestra. Minimum weekly salary will be; 1975-76—\$265; '76-'77—\$280; '77-'78—\$300.

Vacation time was improved by adding a second week in the 1975-76 season and a third week for players with ten or more years of service, to commence with the 1976-77 season.

Leo J. Le Page  
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

## ALL IT TAKES IS AN IDEA AND FIVE MINUTES

If there is anything foggy about Seattle its the weather not the Seattle Orchestra Committee. They tried a new gimmick to get orchestra members to write to their congressmen. At an orchestra meeting they passed out addresses of their congressmen and two postcards to each member. It took five minutes during the meeting to write the cards after which a box was passed to collect them. The Seattle Symphony Orchestra Player's Organization paid for the postage and mailed them. Ninety cards were collected.

Another Committee idea is to provide each member with a brief outline of the matters discussed at the ICSOM conference. Short reports are then given at each meeting to keep interest in ICSOM stimulated.

Melanie Burrell reports that the Richmond bill was explained at a recent Denver orchestra meeting. Postcards were written at that time to the appropriate congressmen on the Ways and Means Committee. The same procedure was followed in regard to the National Endowment appropriation. In all, 100 cards were mailed. Names and addresses were readily available to the members of the orchestra.

**FLASH!** Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra ratifies contract. Full report in next issue of *Senza Sordino*.

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