

Senza Sordino

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THE FOURTEENTH ICSOM CONFERENCE

A Year of Growth and Recognition

The 1976 ICSOM Conference, held in Denver, was attended by delegates from 35 symphony orchestras. Present again were Dave Winstein, a member of the A. F. M. International Executive Board and Ted Dreher, assistant to the President and head of the A.F.M. Symphony Department. Attending guests were Tasso Harris, Pres. of Local 20, Denver; Mr. W. H. McNichols, Mayor of Denver; David Otto, Secretary of O.C.S.M.; Leon Thompson, Secretary of the Music Assistance Fund; Walter F. Anderson, National Endowment for the Arts; Sam Brown, Treasurer of the State of Colorado, and Ken Farmer, President of Local 2-197 St. Louis. Phil Sipser and Len Liebowitz, legal counsel for ICSOM rounded out a cast which was to address itself to an agenda of substance and length.

Two important evening caucus meetings swelled what was already a heavy work load; however, they were well worth the time

employer are credited to him) and the pension plan's funding formula where the Act requires that pension plans must be funded in no more than thirty years. Compliance with these requirements can be costly. The question naturally arises as to responsibility for compliance. The Act places fiduciary responsibility in this respect upon the employer.

Leon Thompson, secretary of the Music Assistance Fund took the podium to explain a plan by which orchestral fellowships for non-white instrumentalists might be implemented. He asked for input from the Conference. Following his presentation delegates approved a resolution based upon ICSOM's support and approval of the goals and general concept of the Orchestral Fellowship program of the A.A.F. which will allow for an ad hoc committee to work with Dr. Thompson and his colleagues on the implementation of the program.

Walter F. Anderson, Director of the Music Program for the National Endowment for the Arts delivered a highly informative address at the end of which he urged symphony musicians to seek representation on NEA policy making committees. He assured delegates that the National Council for the Arts would give consideration of names suggested by our organization for appointment. It was not long after the Conference ended that our chairman, Irving Segall, was phoned by Mr. Anderson and asked to serve on the Orchestra Section of the Music Advisory Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. This is a significant honor both for ICSOM and for Irving Segall who has graced the ICSOM scene for ten years, serving with distinction as chairman for three years.

Some interesting statistics were revealed in several surveys reported at the Conference. "Tiny" Martin, Boston Symphony, presented the results of a questionnaire on the subject of Artistic Advisory Committees; Ken Richmond, Rochester Symphony, reported on the status of librarians in orchestras throughout the country. Subsequent issues of *Senza Sordino* will detail the results of these surveys.

All officers were elected without opposition for a period of two years.

Progress reports on contract negotiations in: Dallas, St. Louis, Houston, New York, Minnesota, Chicago Lyric Opera, Rochester, New Jersey and New York City Opera were made. At this time it would seem that the situations in Houston and St. Louis are most serious. It is reported that talks in Buffalo have collapsed, as well.

One must say that ICSOM certainly will be perpetuated by a constant quest for information and expertise from the continuing flow of young orchestra musicians who volunteer each year to assume the burden of attending to orchestra matters. They come to ICSOM conferences not only to attend meetings but to discuss mutual problems with colleagues well into the night. We have been fortunate throughout the years to be accorded the warm hospitality of orchestras and Locals at our Conference sites. Denver took a back seat to no one in this respect. It was the first Conference at which delegates were feted by the Board of Trustees of the host orchestra. We are grateful to all; Denver orchestra members, Local #20, the Board of Trustees of the Denver orchestra and, above all, to our ever reliable Melanie Burrell for a monumental effort in co-ordinating all the elements that make for a well run effort. She was helped in no small way by her wonderful family.

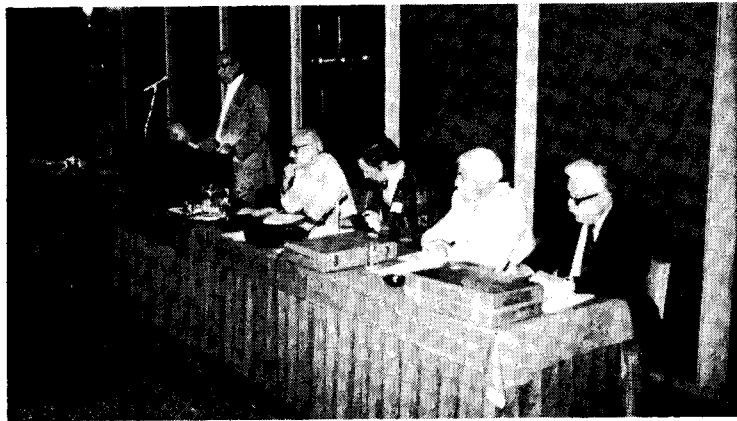


Photo by Bert Siegel

Irving Segall addresses ICSOM delegates.

spent. One concerned itself with the electric media, primarily Public Broadcast Television and cable T.V. The other, a meeting chaired by Bob Jones, Portland, resulted in several hours of discussion of the special problems encountered by the Metropolitan orchestras.

The peculiarities and misunderstandings surrounding the recent strike fund report were thoroughly aired. Particular attention was given the matter of ratification by Strike Fund orchestras of any change in Fund benefits or assessments. It appears that an ambiguity in By-Law language has been resolved by an interpretation whereby Strike Fund contribution is to be classified as dues and subject to ratification when increased. This view is held by the A.F.M.-I.E.B. and their legal counsel and meets the approval of Strike Fund orchestra delegates as well as ICSOM. A tabulation of ratification votes is presently awaited. If approved, the change will result in strike benefits of \$100. per week for a maximum of fifteen weeks. Contributions will increase by \$20. a year. An additional assessment of \$15. a week would be necessary only in the event the \$250,000. A.F.M. cushion had to be tapped.

The recently enacted Pension Reform Act (ERISA) and its effect on orchestra pension plans was discussed by counsel Phil Sipser. The sections of the Act which seem to have the most impact are those involving requirements for vesting (the minimal time an employee must be employed before pension contributions by his

CHICAGO SALARIES RISE \$500 PER WEEK IN '78-'79 SEASON

At 12:02 A.M., September 20, negotiators representing the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's musicians and The Orchestral Association shook hands after agreeing to a new 3-year pact covering the employment of the orchestra's 108 musicians.

The musicians' negotiators had stayed behind in Chicago to continue bargaining while the rest of the orchestra was off on a two week tour of Illinois universities. It was the first time agreement had been reached without a season cancellation, strike or lockout since 1962.

On the day before the orchestra left on tour, it had voted unanimously to adopt a policy of "no contract, no work." It had also empowered its bargaining team to extend the old contract on a temporary basis if it was deemed that agreement was near.

The new agreement will bring minimum salary to \$500 per week in the final year of the contract, marking the first time that any symphony orchestra has achieved a \$26,000 annual guaranteed wage. The new pact will cost The Orchestral Association in excess of \$2 million over the cost of the last contract.

Highlights of the agreement are as follows: minimum salary will rise in \$40 increments each year of the contract, \$420 in '76-'77, \$460 in '77-'78 and \$500 in '78-'79. Normal weekly services remain at 7½ with an 8 service maximum. Vacation also remained at 7 weeks annually, but there will be a guaranteed opportunity for one week of "release time" for each musician during the course of each season.

A new leave of absence provision will allow non-probationary musicians the opportunity to be granted a leave of absence of up to one year without pay. However, a musician on leave will remain covered, along with his or her family, under the Association's health and welfare program. If the musician returns to the orchestra at the conclusion of the leave, he or she will also receive pension credit for the time on leave.

Along with improved health and welfare provisions, insurance has been increased to \$35,000 life, \$70,000 accidental death or dismemberment and \$105,000 for accidental death in a common carrier.

The pension, payable in full at age 60 with 30 years service, was raised to \$9,000 annually and will now be IRS approved, jointly trustee and ERISA insured. Those musicians retiring during the life of this contract will automatically receive any pension raises negotiated for the next agreement.

The orchestra, which will be traveling to Japan and Europe during the course of the contract, will receive a per diem of \$42 a day in Japan and \$37 a day in Europe, with hotel rooms, either single or double, as desired, paid for by management. Domestic per diem will be \$25 a day for those taking singles, and \$30 a day for those sharing a double. Management will pay for hotel rooms, including taxes and standard charges.

Doubling fees will be \$35 per concert. Extra services will pay \$75 for the first extra service and \$90 for the second.

The union negotiating team consisted of Local 10-208 attorney Michael C. Greenfield, President Daniel A. Garamoni, Vice President Nicholas G. Bliss, Committee Members Don Koss, Isadore Zverow, Jerry Sabransky, Raymond Niwa, Richard Graef and Sam Denov.

Sam Denov
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

HOUSTON TRUSTEES LOCK OUT ITS ORCHESTRA

There is an old American folksong Woody Guthrie sang in the Depression, Dust-bowl days, with the words, "I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine, I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine: this Houston water tastes like turpentine, and I ain't a-gonna be treated this-away"! It catches the feelings of many of us in this orchestra, as the lockout goes well past the three-month mark.

On June 14, Management gave us a 48-hour ultimatum: accept the old contract, a \$20 raise, over last season's \$280 minimum, or "the new contract" yet to be negotiated; same raise. We let the preposterous deadline pass.

On Aug. 23, based on a membership questionnaire, we submitted our economic proposals: \$322, \$363, \$400, with disability and seniority pay, improved pension, severance pay. It was rejected. On Sept. 2, they proposed a \$10, 10, no raise the last year; no 52-week guarantee; the right to dissolve the orchestra any year with 60 days' written notice; the removal of our prized Players' Committee which has final and binding say on firings or demotions, etc.

The ineptness of their approach to collective bargaining has reflected the helm-less state of the Houston Symphony Society: resignation in late May by Jim Wright, our manager for 3 years; no Associate Conductor since Akira Endo's departure last January; the death of our founder, Miss Ima Hogg, in August of 1975; the passing of the old-guard from the Board of Directors, with no comparable devotion in the new President or Chairman of the Board in evidence. (A new Manager from London Michael Woolcock, will begin October 1, 1976.)

Briefly, the HSO Management protested our "Allowed" classification by the Texas Employment Commission. Thus, we were all "Disqualified" to receive the paltry \$63 a week from TEC, and our appeals drag on. So, for one month, we had only the \$50 Strike Fund payments until they paid our 5-week vacation salary in a lump sum, to Aug. 21.

We hired a local labor lawyer for our negotiations, an NLRB expert, who appealed the lockout immediately as being "unfair labor practice". We waited until Sept. 21 for the NLRB decision: it was unfavorable, i.e. we had "no case". Mr. Wheat is to appeal their decision in Washington, D. C. on Sept. 27. His illness in July, placing him in the hospital with absolutely no calls or contacts allowed left us without recourse to counsel for a 3-week period. Our Committee continued to meet with the Management lawyer alone during this time. We have now engaged Sipser-Liebowitz for the remainder of the negotiations, and feel it was an expensive mistake for us to have done otherwise.

Our Local has been of substantial support to us, paying half the legal fees and the ICSOM delegate expenses; communication continues to be excellent.

The Houston Symphony and the Houston Grand Opera Society orchestra have been one and the same for ten years. With subscription concerts now cancelled through Nov. 9, we are confronted with negotiating directly with the Director of HGO, through the Union Board and Mr. Liebowitz. We are attempting to influence Mr. Gockley to consider the entire coming opera season, which will ultimately require the full Symphony, rather than to simply "job" 50 players for the first opera, cutting the scored stage-band, etc. (We have learned that our services have always been sold to the Opera for less than scale. Small wonder the HGO is thriving, sold-out, in the black; while in the same Jones Hall, the Houston Symphony is continually in the red, with an accumulated annual deficit of \$1.4 million. Their prosperity has been partly at the Symphony's expense.)

To sum it up, Management's bargaining has been totally regressive. The lockout may be simply to save our salaries, to diminish their deficit by decreasing our groceries, as simple as that. The negotiations are more like taunting, toying with us, at an intentional snail's pace.

Meantime, we are going into debt, depleting our savings, bor-

rowing on life insurance, withdrawing tax-shelter funds, getting other jobs — with an incredible and hilarious variety of resourcefulness, and are determined to stick together. But we are all hurting and need your ICSOM help and donations. It's a first for us, but please send whatever funds your respective orchestras can, to: Jay Andrus, Chairman, Houston Symphony Orchestra Committee, 8026 Ithaca, Houston, Texas 77017. Also, please send scatching mailgrams to: Favez Sarofim, President, Board of Directors, Houston Symphony Society, 615 Louisiana, Houston, Tex. 77002. Remind him that the Symphony of the fifth largest city in the U.S. cannot be measured only by budgets, businessmen and cowboys!

Kyla Bynum,
ICSOM Correspondent
Houston Symphony Orchestra

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

ICSOM has just concluded one of its most successful conferences. As you may have heard from your delegate's report, a myriad of topics were covered in the agenda, and by the guest speakers. I plan in future issues of *Senza*, to cover in depth some of these topics such as our future relationship with the National Endowment for the Arts, as expressed by Dr. Walter Anderson in his address to the conference.

I came away from the Denver conference with one thought uppermost in my mind. The symphony musician in the United States now has a VOICE. It is organized and recognized.

The voice reaches into the 41 leading symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras in the country through *Senza*, delegates, ICSOM bulletins, the ICSOM directory, the Federation wage chart, and telephone calls. This exchange of information has resulted through the years in improved contracts for orchestras at every level. In addition to wages and working conditions and welfare benefits, many contracts today include seating arrangements, audition procedures, and artistic policy consultation, all as a result of ICSOM providing the means of exchanging ideas and ways of implementing them.

The ICSOM voice reaches into the Federation where we are consulted on symphonic matters. At the last recording negotiation sessions, our representatives were consulted and had input on all matters relating to symphonic recording. It is our information which goes into the Wage Chart. We have representation at the current negotiation with Home Box Office, a cable TV company currently negotiating with the Federation. We are working on proposals for the new National Public Television Agreement which expires at the end of Feb. 1977.

Our voice also reaches into the offices of Federal Legislators. We, along with other segments of the performing arts community, have been influential in getting appropriations passed for the National Endowment for the Arts; we have supported the Richmond Bill, and we are currently working towards having input into the National Endowment for the Arts by the recent appointment of your Chairman to the Music Advisory Panel, Orchestra Section, of that organization.

We are recognized as the voice of the symphony musician in the performing arts community itself. We have attended workshops and seminars with representatives of people in the Theater, Opera and Ballet, and the Conductors' Guide of the American Symphony Orchestra League. We are referred to in many periodicals and books as the spokesman for the American symphony musician, and so we are.

This is an incredible record when one considers that it has been accomplished by unpaid volunteers, meeting face to face only once a year, and at a cost to each orchestra member of about the price of one dinner a year.

In closing, I want to thank the delegates for their vote of confidence in re-electing me for another term. They have all been an absolute inspiration to work with and to know. If your orchestra is in the Phila. New York area this season, and my schedule permits (I also play the viola for a living) I would love to meet with you. Just ask me.

Irving Segall

TWO-YEAR SYMPHONY PACT SIGNED BY OREGON SYMPHONY

A new two-year Agreement between the Oregon Symphony Society and Local 99 provides for substantially increased employment and income for the Oregon Symphony musicians while giving the Society greater flexibility in scheduling and types of services to encourage further growth in the years to come. Players will be offered either an A or B Contract. By the second year of the Agreement, Contract B sidemen will receive a minimum of \$201.60 per week for 36 weeks and principals will receive a minimum of \$284.15 for 36 weeks. This is for an average of five services per week. Total annual wage for a side man has gone from \$4900 to \$7257.60; for a principal from \$5610 to \$10,229.40. In the area of fringe benefits, two major items are the 5% Society contribution to the AFM-EPW Pension Fund and a complete Blue Cross Health and Major Medical Plan paid for by the Society. For the first time, parking will be provided for all evening and Sunday services performed at the Civic Auditorium.

All musicians will receive not less than a 7% pay increase during each of the two years covered by this Agreement. Per diem for out of town services will increase 10% the first year and 9% the second year. Sick leave has been increased to 7 days after a player's probationary first year, then one additional day per year to a maximum of 14 days.

Scheduling of services was an issue of major concern to both sides. The Society needs increased player availability in order to expand the season and provide more work. On the other hand, most of the musicians maintain exhausting teaching schedules or hold other jobs outside the Symphony. Scheduling relief asked for and received by the musicians includes: One day free of services and travel out of each week, a limitation on the number of Saturday services, two 7-day periods during each season during which no services shall be scheduled and twelve 5-day work week during each season.

The Society was given the right to sub-contract the orchestra for certain types of work outside the traditional symphonic role. Stringent limitations have been agreed upon to enable the Society to develop more services without eroding that work which was previously available and sometimes played by non-symphony musicians. The Society shall have the right to sub-contract *not less than all* of the Contract B players for opera (not to include Portland Opera Association), ballet, musical comedy or oratorio for a maximum of 17 such services each season. When the instrumentation of a sub-contracted engagement makes it impossible to utilize all Contract B players, musicians shall be chosen on a rotation basis. Should the sub-contracted services require the employment of three or more musicians who are not under contract to the Oregon Symphony, one of these musicians shall be designated as contractor and shall be responsible for contracting such outside musicians in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Union at the applicable Union Price List rates or the rates set forth in the Symphony Contract whichever are higher. The Symphony Contract B musicians shall not be sub-contracted at a cost of less than the prevailing applicable Union rates and minimum hiring requirements.

There will continue to be a minimum of 80 contracted Symphony players.

Negotiations were conducted by Bob Jones (Local 99 Secretary-Treasurer), Patricia Miller (Orchestra Players Committee Chairperson) and Paul Salvatore (Orchestra Committee Member) on behalf of the Orchestra. David Hyslop, General Manager, and James Roger, attorney represented the Society. Talks started last February and continued until orchestra ratification of the contract on July 22 by a nearly unanimous vote. The new season is to open in September.

Bob Jones,
Oregon Symphony Orchestra

BOWING REBUTTAL

I read Mr. Everett O'Bannon's letter concerning the controversial issue of "free" bowings and felt like expressing another point of view.

Mr. O'Bannon stresses the accepted fact that string players could not be "perfectly happy" with bowings handed down—even from a Heifetz or Koussevitsky. Since "perfect happiness" occurs so rarely in ones lifetime, I don't think I can accept that as a reason for throwing out bowings quite yet. This comes, by the way, from a principal second fiddle player who, by nature or tradition, is oftentimes "lady (or man)-in waiting" to the final bowings of a concert. Nevertheless, I'm for them!

I have to admit to a certain aesthetic pleasure I get watching a string section bowing in unison, but it wasn't until a conductor in the pit asked for a particular bowing to accent a particular passage and a member of the section protested, rather annoyed, "What's the difference . . . we're in the pit!?" that I realized that it *was* the technical and not the aesthetic that was of prime importance.

How does one separate phrasing from a manner of bowing? The right hand of a string player is indeed like the breathing of a singer. And can you hear a great chorus made up of individuals each taking a breath in the music whenever he felt it personally convenient?

Mr. O'Bannon says he knows from personal experience with Stokowski that *free bowing* does not mean *chaotic phrasing*. I have not played under Mr. Stokowski but I would like to ask Mr. O'Bannon how many orchestras he knows (from personal experience) who are blessed with a conductor who can communicate his desires so clearly and so eloquently that there is no need to "specify the mechanics of production?"

Could it be that somewhere there might be principals who would rather not bother to work out bowings and section players who would rather not bother to copy them?

In my experience in playing concerts where the parts were bowed, as opposed to clean parts or individually marked parts, there has been no comparison in the outcome. Bowings well thought out by the conductor and/or principals and carefully marked produced *by far* the most articulate and secure performances.

Marilynn Kregal
Principal 2nd Violin
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA SETTLES

Preserving a tradition of never losing a single day's pay due to a work stoppage, the players of the Minnesota Orchestra ratified a new 3-year contract on September 16th, which provides a \$1,200,000 increase in salaries and other benefits. Vote to accept was 71 to 7. The package includes \$100 in across-the-board raises increasing the scale immediately to \$340, and \$350 in March 1977; \$365 in September 1977 and \$380 in March 1978; \$395 in September 1978 and \$420 in March 1979. Included in the raises are Electronic Media guarantees of \$10, \$20, and \$25 in each of the respective seasons. Vacation is 7 weeks each year. The season remains at 50 weeks, becoming 52 weeks in the third year of the contract.

Pension benefits will be increased by basing prior service credits on 1969 salaries. Current retirees shall receive an annual bonus distributed from the proceeds of a special pension concert and the Association's annual contribution of \$5,000. Bonus per player is expected to be about \$25 for each year of service rendered.

The Association will increase monthly contributions for health insurance from \$2,500 to \$4,300. Major medical increases to \$1,000,000 with 80% paid to \$2,000, 100% to \$1,000,000. In the third year of the contract there will be disability insurance of 50% of the musician's salary up to \$2000 monthly effective 1 year after

the disability occurs. Life insurance will increase to \$15,000 for the first two years and \$20,000 for the third.

Gains were made in working conditions, such as: 1/2 hour reduction in the second service of a double rehearsal; the phasing out of five 3-hour rehearsals, improved tour and run-out provisions; and more player participation in auditions, non-renewal, and demotions.

The Orchestra Committee had the advantage of past experience in negotiating. Local 73 was most helpful and supportive. Counsel Ronald Rollins gained the respect, praise, and the admiration of all the Orchestra for a superlative job. At all times, the Committee and Counsel had the full support of the members of the Orchestra.

Ross Tolbert
Chairman, Minnesota Orchestra
Negotiating Committee

INDIANAPOLIS SIGNS IN JULY

On July 1 members of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra ratified a three-year contract by a vote of 59 to 5. The length of season remains at the current 43 weeks, while the scale is increased to \$300.00 for the 1976-77 season, \$322.50 for the 1977-78 season, and \$350.00 for the 1978-79 season, with three weeks vacation intermittent through the season. The first season's raise is 10% across the board, which is beneficial to the over-scale player. The following two seasons have straight dollar raises across the board.

Foremost among the non-economic issues is a clause establishing a player's review committee which, by a point system, may vote to overrule the music director in dismissal cases. One area where we made no progress was in lengthening the season, but otherwise we feel our negotiating team was able to come up with a very good contract.

This is the first time in about 15 years that the I.S.O. has ratified a contract before the season's end. This is a result of the mutual respect of both parties, and realistic, intensive, give-and-take sessions with a sincere desire to get the job done. Management negotiators were tough but fair, a far cry from previous years, when a propensity to dictate rather than negotiate resulted in bitterness and two strikes.

Also, this season completes the musical and personnel manager career of Max Woodbury, retiring after having been a part of the Indianapolis scene for 39 years, and his wife, Norma Olson Woodbury, who has completed 24 years of service. Harold Hansen, a long time orchestra committee member, negotiator, and ICSOM representative is to be the new personnel manager. Harold is much respected by I.S.O. musicians for his fairness, honesty, and efficiency, and will be warmly welcomed to his new post.

Olive Rhodes,
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

DECEMBER ISSUE

- More contract agreements
- Electronic media report
- Classical record sales advance
- More on European orchestras

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