

Senza Sordino

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ICSOM AN INVESTMENT TO PROTECT

Henry Shaw

While culling through assorted ICSOM memorabilia recently, I slowly developed the mood necessary for putting the organization archives in order. I was immediately sidetracked upon picking up Volume I, issue No. 1 of *Senza Sordino* and became engrossed in re-reading it. It was dated January, 1963. The issue represented the carrying out of a mandate by the representatives of twelve major orchestras who met in Chicago in May, 1962 to discuss orchestra issues of common interest and concern. The first item on their agenda was the establishment of a Federation-wide orchestra newsletter. The priority is noteworthy, not so much because it was the first action in a long succession which would be taken in the ensuing fifteen years, but rather because it emphasizes the desire for communication that existed among those present. It was the hunger for information that was the catalyst which came to bind orchestra players into a new common bond and which has held them together for these many years. It was from this springboard that many began to profit from a new inter-relationship and to realize that a common bond can be helpful in solving common problems.

Flushed with the success of the initial meeting, the group decided not to wait a full year for another, so four months later, in September, 1962, delegates of these twelve orchestras, now joined by eight additional ones, met in Cleveland and chartered the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS. What these orchestras shared were musicians, all of whom had a common interest; a need to earn a living from orchestra employment. In general, the goals of ICSOM were every orchestra musician's goals and immediately struck a responsive reaction from its membership. Orchestra delegates agreed that the organization was a "can't miss" success as long as it mirrored the orchestra musician's needs and that its efforts were translated into tangible results.

Since it is a volunteer organization supported entirely by a voluntary dues structure, ICSOM has been a pay as you go, hand to mouth operation since its inception. While it may seem on the surface a flaw, it is most certainly one of its strengths. What has been accomplished has been done on a shoe string budget; the dedication of inspired officers over the years and, most of all, by the continuous individual support of its membership. What has resulted is an inexorable movement towards a more rewarding livelihood. For its part, ICSOM stands with pride as a model of democratic unionism in action.

One did not expect the immediacy of ICSOM's popularity among its members to rub off on everyone else. In its formative years it was termed in various sectors a "group of abrasive trouble-makers." But gradually attitudes softened. The press became more supportive. One by one high priority organizational goals were met.

An organizational newsletter was created. A Symphony Department was established by the American Federation of Musicians. Orchestra committee representation at local contract nego-

tiations was permitted. Perhaps the most important change of all was that orchestra personnel now began to ratify contract proposals. Legal counsel was retained to advise on an organizational level and to be at the disposal of orchestra committees on a local level. A Strike Fund, the by-product of a decision of ICSOM members to seek Conference status within the American Federation of Musicians was begun. Distribution of Orchestra Wage and Condition charts became an annual event. There were other accomplishments too numerous to mention.

The tolerance level for ICSOM from outside the organization continues to rise. Acceptability for its own sake has never been striven for, however, ICSOM has much to contribute in addition to its service to its members. It is important to attract willing listeners for we have something to say. The subscription list for *Senza Sordino* now includes innumerable A.F. of M. locals; orchestra associations as far away as Hong Kong; virtually every governmental agency concerned with the Arts; a long list of periodicals, libraries, authors, critics and music schools. In addition, the appointment of ICSOM Chairman, Irving Segall to serve on the Orchestra Section of the Music Advisory Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts reflects with honor upon the organization as well as himself.

This vignette of ICSOM history and the accompanying summary of its accomplishments are common knowledge to most of its membership. Although not an organizational trait, it becomes necessary upon occasion to "blow one's own horn" for the influx of new players into our orchestras is constant. To tell what has transpired since 1962 should become a part of new member orientation. Also, for many, ICSOM may have become to mean little more than six issues of *Senza Sordino* and a request for a dues payment once a year. It is a problem we face, since more personal contact is primarily the privilege of our delegates and orchestra committees. However, it must be emphasized that ICSOM represents an investment and it must be protected. Perhaps an occasional reminder of difficulties that had to be dealt with is in order, along with the admonition that history can surely repeat itself where complacency becomes the order of the day. The chart appearing in this issue will remind some of what earning a living 25 years ago entailed.

The symphony scene is perpetually in crisis. Orchestra associations in many instances are financially strained. The role of government in perpetuating the symphony orchestra as a fully functioning institution in our communities will become increasingly crucial. There is developing a new group of orchestras whose members are clearly voicing their discontent with the condition of part time employment in their orchestras. Orchestra opportunities for exposure, as electronic media becomes increasingly important in bringing the performing arts into the living room, will open up new areas for discussion.

The ICSOM conference table must remain a significant site for discussion of these subjects along with others.

MAJOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SURVEY — 1952-1953

THIS SURVEY COVERS EMPLOYMENT BY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS WHOSE MEMBERS
ARE EMPLOYED BY THE WEEK

CITY	STATE	NAME OF ORCHESTRA	Number of Men		Number of Importations	No. of Weeks		Minimum Scale		Seasonal Budget
			Regular Season	Summer Season		Regular Season	Summer Season	Regular Season	Summer Season	
Boston	Massachusetts	BOSTON SYMPHONY Conductor, Charles Munch	105	105	7	30	16	\$125.00	\$105.00	\$1,826,565.00
New York	New York	NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC Conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos	106	0	0	30	0	140.00	0	1,241,500.00
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	PHILADELPHIA SYMPHONY Conductor, Eugene Ormandy	104	91	0	32	6	135.00	112.50	1,200,000.00
Chicago	Illinois	CHICAGO SYMPHONY Conductor, Rafael Kubelik	102	98	0	28	6	132.50		1,015,027.53
Cleveland	Ohio	CLEVELAND SYMPHONY Conductor, George Szell	95	70	20	30	6	98.00	55.00	679,000.00
Los Angeles	California	LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC Conductor, Alfred Wallenstein	100	88	0	22½	8	100.00	100.00	572,000.00
Detroit	Michigan	DETROIT SYMPHONY Conductor, Paul Paray	102	86	11	22	12	100.00	70.00	571,692.67
Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY Conductor, William Steinberg	87	0	27	25	0	100.00	0	514,928.76
Cincinnati	Ohio	CINCINNATI SYMPHONY Conductor, Thor Johnson	88	0	1	28	0	95.00	0	501,398.77
Minneapolis	Minnesota	MINNEAPOLIS SYMPHONY Conductor, Antal Darati	89	0	16	26	0	100.00	0	487,551.25
Washington	D. C.	NATIONAL SYMPHONY Conductor, Howard Mitchell	86	0	26	26	0	80.00	0	479,644.93
San Francisco	California	SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY Guest Conductors	96	0	0	22	0	100.00	0	450,000.00
Rochester	New York	ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC Conductor, Eric Leinsdorf	45	0	0	30	0	88.00	0	400,000.00
Houston	Texas	HOUSTON SYMPHONY Conductor, Efram Kurtz	85	46	25	24	8	90.00	50.00	400,000.00
San Antonio	Texas	SAN ANTONIO SYMPHONY Victor Alessandro	73	0	46	21	0	70.00	0	330,000.00
Dallas	Texas	DALLAS SYMPHONY Conductor, Walter Hendl	72	0	26	20	0	80.00	0	320,000.00
Toronto	Ontario	TORONTO SYMPHONY Conductor, Sir Ernest MacMillan	86	0	1	26	0	70.00	0	285,000.00
St. Louis	Missouri	ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY Conductor, Vladimir Golschmann	85	0	25	23	0	96.25	0	280,000.00
Baltimore	Maryland	BALTIMORE SYMPHONY Conductor, Massimo Freccia	85	0	45	20	0	70.00	0	280,000.00
New Orleans	Louisiana	NEW ORLEANS PHILHARMONIC SYMPHONY Conductor, Alexander Hilsberg	82	0	43	20	0	65.00	0	258,280.50
Indianapolis	Indiana	INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY Conductor, Fabien Sevitzky	83	0	40	20	0	70.00	0	252,500.00
Kansas City	Missouri	KANSAS CITY PHILHARMONIC Conductor, Hans Schwieger	79	0	41	20	0	78.00	0	230,593.97
Atlanta	Georgia	ATLANTA SYMPHONY Conductor, Henry Sopkin	85	0	34	22	0	55.00	0	164,000.00
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	OKLAHOMA CITY SYMPHONY Conductor, Guy Frazier Harrison	69	0	20	22	0	60.50	0	161,000.00
Denver	Colorado	DENVER SYMPHONY Conductor, Saul Caston	80	70	20	20	6	65.00	60.00	160,000.00
Buffalo	New York	BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC Conductor, Isler Solomon	80	40	19	21	10	82.50	15.00 per concert	150,000.00
Portland	Oregon	PORTLAND SYMPHONY Conductor, James Sample	67	0	4	22	0	50.00	0	140,000.00
Salt Lake City	Utah	UTAH SYMPHONY Conductor, Maurice Abravanel	80	35	4	18	3	42.50	42.50	125,000.00
Vancouver	British Columbia	VANCOUVER SYMPHONY Conductor, Irwin Hoffman	70	0	0	12	0	54.00	0	114,483.32
Raleigh	North Carolina	NORTH CAROLINA SYMPHONY Conductor, Benjamin F. Swalin	60	0	55	17	0	62.00	0	105,000.00
Orlando	Florida	FLORIDA SYMPHONY Conductor, Yves Chardon	68	0	57	12	0	60.00	0	104,000.00
Chicago	Illinois	GRANT PARK SYMPHONY Conductor, Nicolai Malko	75	75	0	8	8	88.00	88.00	85,000.00
TOTALS			2,269	804	613	719½	89			\$13,884,166.70

(Compiled by American Federation of Musicians)

TWO VIEWS ON TECHNICAL PERFECTION

(From *Senza Sordino*, April, 1965)

Victor Alessandro

Conductor of the San Antonio Symphony

In an interview with the sports editor of the San Antonio News, Mr. Alessandro finds that symphony musicians are "far beneath the study pace of less complicated things—like football."

Mr. Alessandro explains: "I'm referring to the study. The homework. A good college or pro football team is far advanced in technical study over us. They have first class movies made of every performance—sometimes films made of just workouts—and they study them carefully. When they make an error they know exactly who did it and why. They work for long hours to correct each error. They have end coaches, line coaches, backfield coaches, defense coaches, offense coaches, and head coaches. They're far advanced over musical groups."

Mr. Alessandro feels that symphonies won't be able to catch up for a long time. "But", he says, "if we had the money, I'd love to put a tiny tape recorder on or near each instrument during a performance. Then, and only then, would we be able to determine exactly who did exceptionally well and who committed errors during a difficult selection." Mr. Alessandro says that several hundred errors can be committed in just 2 or 3 seconds at some concerts. He concludes: ". . . it makes no difference which orchestra you're talking about. There's that much margin for error, and when you're dealing in the possibility of hundreds of errors in a 2 second period, just imagine how many boots you might get during a lengthy selection. No, I'm afraid we're not nearly far enough advanced. Certainly, not as far as professional football."

Alan Rich

Critic of the New York Herald Tribune

A very different point of view is expressed by Mr. Rich in a recent article entitled: *In Defense of Wrong Notes*. Mr. Rich says: ". . . Lately there has come about a rather distorted attitude toward the value of technical perfection in the total scheme of a musical performance."

Mr. Rich feels this mania for perfection has been fostered largely by the recording industry. He finds that "Symphony orchestras do not play in person the way they do on records, even setting aside the distortions in total sound introduced by the so called 'high-fidelity' recording process. They are more human in person, and in being so they are more prone to the weaknesses of the flesh." After recalling some concerts in which artists goofed, Mr. Rich concludes that none of the "errors" have anything to do with the artistry of the people involved, but have a great deal to do with their humanness and fallability. He says, "Superior persons tend to rise up in overwhelming wrath when a horn-player at a symphonic concert bumps an occasional note, or when a pianist or singer runs into an air pocket on the way to his goal. A baseball player who can finish a season with a batting average of .400 is a rare and wonderful phenomenon, but in music we demand 1.000 or there is no contest.

(P.S. The .400 hitter will make more money than the 1.000 singer could ever count.)"

A View of Conducting Technique

"(Conductors) also possess their own brand of technique. Evidently there is such a thing as technique, but if there is, then how is it that a man who has never conducted or studied conducting is capable of giving an acceptable performance without warning and on the spur of the moment? No one can expect a comparable feat on any instrument." —Gregor Piatigorsky

CONFERENCE DATE ANNOUNCED

The 1977 ICSOM Conference will be held in Cleveland from Monday, August 29th to Friday, September 2nd. Registration will take place Monday morning. The first meeting will begin in the afternoon. The Conference will terminate Friday afternoon. One day has been added to accommodate an expanding agenda and more work sessions. Delegates are urged to note the above dates. Further information will be forthcoming in the near future.

"PARDON US!" DEPARTMENT

Data pertaining to the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra in the Wage Chart appearing in the last issue of *Senza Sordino* was not accurate. Their season is 41 weeks long; \$200. weekly wage; \$8,200 guaranteed annual salary.

The basic salary attributed to members of the Berlin Philharmonic in the last issue of *Senza Sordino* was incorrectly translated from Duetsche marks to dollars. The basic salary is \$32,867 yearly, not \$27,600. yearly as quoted.

"Leave it to the ignorant and stupid who judge by counting only the faults. I can be grateful for even one wonderful phrase."
—Casals

(From *Senza Sordino*, April, 1964, concerning National Symphony Orchestra Strike)

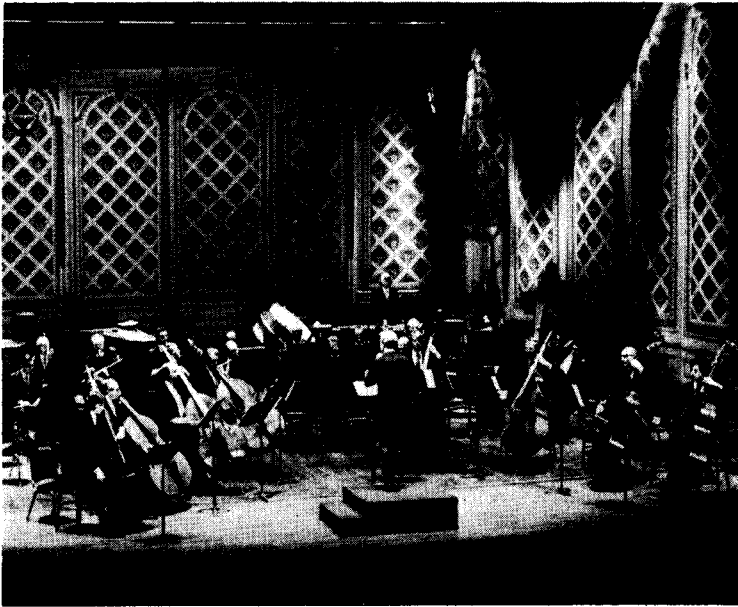
The N.S.O. Committee reports "In the past 15 years over 200 musicians have come and gone from the N.S.O. Only 16 are members who were here 15 years ago. Within the past 5 years nearly half of the personnel is new." "This significant turnover in personnel does not contribute to the musical well-being of the orchestra and is directly related to the prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty, fear, and suspicion, so detrimental to musical expression."

MINNESOTA MUSICIANS PERFORM AT INAUGURAL

Four principal string players of the Minnesota Orchestra, Les Foli, Kensley Rosen, Clyn Barrus and Robert Jamieson played as a string quartet at the Inaugural reception January 21st at the White House. They played a program of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Dvorak. After the performance the quartet talked with the Carters and the Mondales.

The sound of fine chamber music and symphonic music is a daily occurrence at the White House these days. An aide has said that President Carter has a stereo system constantly tuned in while he works.

Kirke Walker
Minnesota Orchestra



CSO PREMIERES BICENTENNIAL FANFARE FEATURING BASSES

The world premiere of Frank Proto's *Bicentennial Fanfare*, commissioned by Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Music Director Thomas Schippers, was performed by the CSO November 5 and 6 at Cincinnati's Music Hall under the baton of Maestro Schippers. The work was one of a series commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in celebration of the bicentennial year.

BIRDLAND CONCERTGEBOUW

(From Senza Sordino, 1964)

"The union's concern—and the public's—must be for 'sandlot' players from the colleges, the dance bands, the night clubs and the bandstands who must fill the symphonic chairs of tomorrow."

Herman Kenin (from "Conserving America's Cultural Resources" Published in the AFL-CIO "American Federationist")

FM LISTENER BUYING PREFERENCES SURVEYED

A rather impressive fifty volume survey was completed by a New York research firm last year concerning itself with the buying habits of radio listeners. The analytical material is drawn from the preferences of music listeners of every persuasion from classical to rock. A summary of the survey was presented last summer at the Concert Music Broadcasters' Association conference. They learned that classical listeners are the superior consumers of more than half of the 900 products mentioned in the research. The study disproves what manufacturers generally assert; that classical listeners aren't worth a mass appeal.

If you tune in to your local F.M. classical station, you are apt to be a most susceptible target for pitches on European vacations, wines, imported cars and banking and investment services, according to the survey. In addition, broadcasters think that they can now more adeptly advertise to your taste preferences in such mundane items as salad dressings, toilet tissue, dog food, hair spray and vacation spots.

You are an excellent target for books and records by mail; a consumer of yogurt and roquefort or blue cheese dressing. You are twice as likely to spend \$100. a year on camping equipment and four times as apt to own a sailboat.

So, be on guard when you set your F.M. radio dial. It seems that you have been computerized by the advertiser.

TO A CONVALESCING FIRST CHAIR PLAYER

(From The Music Journal, 1963)

The boys here at the Philharmonic
Miss you very sadly.
Old Harry Brown, who's in your chair,
Says he, too, feels badly;
He played your solo well last night.
He never missed a phrase.
He played it just like you used to do.
With all your winsome ways.
Twelve encores he played with ease.
Each note by you inspired.
And by the way, the maestro says
To tell you that you're fired!

—Harvey Rudoff

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Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, Buffalo Symphony, Metropolitan Opera, New Haven Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, New York City Ballet, New York City Opera, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphony, National Symphony.

SOUTHERN ORCHESTRAS

Elizabeth Patterson Girko, Dallas Symphony
4051 Meadowdale, Dallas, Texas 75229, Phone: (214) 350-7136

Atlanta Symphony, Birmingham Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Florida Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, New Orleans Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, St. Louis Symphony.

CENTRAL ORCHESTRAS

Bert Siegel, Cleveland Orchestra
2621 N. Moreland Blvd. Cleveland, O. 44120, Phone: (216) 752-0344

Chicago Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony.

WESTERN ORCHESTRAS

Melanie Burrell, Denver Symphony
415 Garfield St., Denver, Colo. 80206, Phone: (303) 388-1333

Denver Symphony, Honolulu Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Oakland Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, San Diego Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony.

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