

Senza Sordino

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METROPOLITAN OPERA SETTLEMENT HIGHEST ORCHESTRA INCREASE IN COUNTRY

The Metropolitan Opera Association and the members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Local 802 A.F.M., reached a settlement on Friday, September 9, when the Orchestra ratified the management's offer of a 3-year contract. After a 2½ hour meeting, during which very aspect of the contract was debated and discussed, a secret ballot was taken with a vote of 59 to 22 to accept.

Highlights of the new agreement feature a 7% increase of individual base pay (bonus included), rehearsals, doubling, etc. For example, a minimum scale player who had been receiving \$428.40 per week will now get \$458.38, \$490.46, and \$524.81 in each of three succeeding years. However, since overscale and rehearsal pay are included, the increase averages \$130 over the three years of the contract.

A major breakthrough was achieved in the pension. An earlier survey of the Orchestra revealed this to be the single most important item to the Orchestra. Our pension, which was among the worst of any major orchestra, has now become one of the top orchestra pensions in the country due to an estimated 50% increase in benefits. Some representative examples are:

yrs. of service	former benefits	present benefits
43	\$8,917.99	\$13,254
36	7,092.66	10,368
31	6,476.30	9,494

The Supplemental Unemployment Benefits Program (SUB), initiated in the previous contract, was retained for the full three years of the contract. This calls for a guaranteed 44 weeks per year plus 8 weeks of SUB (with the option of the Met replacing the SUB with work). The Met is already tentatively planning a three week extension of its 1978-79 and 1979-80 New York Seasons.

Our Per Diem was increased from \$35 to \$44 per day, the IRS maximum.

Our major medical coverage was increased from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per individual.

Management's offer included no improvements in the work load. The Orchestra would have had to go into a "lock-out" situation to achieve any breakthrough here. With the monetary package being what it was, the Orchestra voted acceptance.

An added feature of this contract includes three live telecasts from the Met each year. The final details are still being worked out with the A.F.M. In the first year of T.V., we will be receiving \$200 additional per man per Telecast.

With the invaluable help of our eminent counsels, I. Philip Sipsper and Leonard Leibowitz, and the solid backing of Local 802 A.F.M. and its President, Max Arons, the Orchestra made improvements in areas that were most important to it.

We wish to thank ICSOM for its support and those Orchestras specifically that sent letters and mailgrams to the Met urging a settlement.

Sandor Balint, Chairman
Metropolitan Opera
Orchestra Committee

THE ICSOM EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

John Palanchian's last treasurer's report contains the usual figures on the health of the ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund. Total assets \$41,901.30. To ICSOM neophytes the figure, or for that matter the nature of the Fund itself, must have limited meaning. To most members it signifies another yearly increase in the E.R.F. in the organization's goal to make it an ever more meaningful source of self help.

How did it all begin? The E.R.F. predates the A.F.M.-ICSOM Strike Fund by a number of years. In the early sixties, when year round employment was merely a goal, the onset of a work stoppage, of course, followed a summer period when almost all orchestras lay fallow. This is not to suggest that the condition no longer exists. The economic effect was, naturally, devastating. The resultant S.O.S. would scare up an occasional \$500. from a more fortunate orchestra's treasury. It was generally inadequate, but the best that could be done under the circumstances. At the same time, orchestra members were urged to include a few extra dollars along with their yearly dues assessment to be set aside for emergency relief. In the spirit that has always exemplified orchestra members, in virtually every case where lump sum aid was repaid to an orchestra, this money was offered as a contribution to the Fund.

By 1970 the E.R.F. had grown to \$9,000. on voluntary contributions alone. In 1974 ICSOM's three tiered dues structure was altered to include a \$2.00 contribution into the E.R.F. which at that time contained approximately \$13,000. Since that time the Fund has grown by \$9,000 a year.

Its function is dissimilar to the A.F.M.-ICSOM Strike Fund which provides a specific weekly benefit for a specific yearly assessment. The E.R.F. is available to all ICSOM orchestra members whether they contribute to the Strike Fund or not. It is available under a variety of circumstances of an emergency nature, of course. Generally, but not necessarily, used when the orchestra is involved in a work stoppage, request for funds must be made by a musician through his orchestra committee; for that matter an orchestra committee itself might avail itself of funds where an orchestra treasury can not sustain larger expenditures for such items as newspaper ads, printing costs or other publicity related expenditures.

Certain guidelines were introduced and approved at the 1977 ICSOM Conference. A motion was offered that "(1) a loan limit of \$4000. be set, interest free, for a period of one (1) year from the date of settlement of contract; thereafter, interest at the rate of five and one-half (5½%) per annum be imposed; (2) that in order to be eligible, an orchestra *must* have paid the previous year's dues, *and* have paid off completely any outstanding loans from the E.R.F." The motion was made by Treasurer John Palanchian, moved by Raymond Niva, Chicago Symphony, seconded by Sandor Balint, Met Opera Orchestra. The motion was passed 30 aye, 2 nay.

The intent is to allow an orchestra a loan of approximately 10% of the fund in any one year. As the fund grows the loan limit will undoubtedly increase with it. Any question pertinent to the use of the E.R.F. may be addressed to John Palanchian, New York City Opera, ICSOM's capable treasurer who has nurtured this aspect of our endeavor and deserves our appreciation for the state of the E.R.F. as we find it.

CINCINNATI SIGNS THREE YEAR AGREEMENT

On Saturday, October 8th, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra members ratified a new three year contract by a vote of 81 to 15. This was after an extension of our contract deadline of three weeks, agreed to by both parties. The settlement was retroactive.

Our areas of main concern were a qualified pension plan (we were previously retiring musicians on a combination of three small plans); a salary increase to maintain parity with other orchestras in our classification and a per diem increase (our per diem had been pitifully low). After much anxiety we reached our goals as follows:

Pension—\$6000 at age 65 with 30 years of service in addition to any accumulated benefits in the AFM-EPW and an old plan frozen in 1971. This better than doubles our past benefits and is payable to all retirees since 1971.

Salary—

1977-78 . . . \$335. (\$30. AB increase) plus 20. E.M.G. Total, \$355.
 1978-79 . . . \$365. (\$30. AB increase plus \$20. E.M.G. Total, \$385.
 Sept. '79 . . . \$395. (\$30 AB increase) plus \$20. E.M.G. Total, \$415.
 March '80 \$425. (\$30. AB increase) plus \$20. E.M.G. Total, \$445.

We were pleased to obtain the increase in weekly salary rather than the Electronic Media Guarantee which remained the same. Our 1976-77 salary was \$325, plus \$20, E.M.G. The new agreement represents an increase of \$120. over three years.

Per Diem—'77-78—\$35. '78-'79—\$36. '79-'80—\$37, plus \$10. per week on tours in excess of 5 days.

Our final proposal to the orchestra contained 22 pages and we were gratified that we could present it in its entirety, giving members a full day to peruse it before taking a ratification vote.

Audition procedures were spelled out in detail and although final decision to hire is still the prerogative of the Music Director, we were able to agree that a unanimous vote by the audition committee opposing the Music Director's choice would void his selection.

Our orchestra committee now is mentioned in our master agreement in all areas where negotiation for change or discussion is to be forthcoming. We feel that we have made inroads in obtaining a greater voice in orchestra decision making. This was due in no small part to the confidence shown in our ability by our managers who dealt with us always on the highest ethical level. Other areas of improvement included the manner of payment for extra service; increased overtime payment; firming up of the length of student concerts and the calculation of bus travel in terms of time only, (4½ hours maximum.).

As always, areas of concessions were necessary. An addition of five Sunday rehearsals during the summer season; back to back children's concerts at Music Hall, previously not permissible; Alternation of certain vacation periods.

The final draft was a lengthy document and took many hours of work. The result was a clarification of many grey areas and a fine contract arrived at with no strike, lock out or bitter personality conflicts. The orchestra committee of Messrs. Platt, Myers, Blalack and Eifert and Ms. Olson are grateful to our attorney Phil Sipser for his tremendous insight and expertise, to Eugene Frey, President of Local No. 1 for his untiring effort and support, and to the good will displayed by the entire management team in sharing with us the objective of keeping the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra a major orchestra in every sense of the word.

Otto Eifert,
 Chairman, C.S.O. Players' Committee.

MILWAUKEE AGREEMENT SIGNED

The Milwaukee Symphony Musicians ratified a new three-year agreement by a vote of 69-11 on August 31, 1977. Minimum weekly scale in the 1976-77 season was \$302.50. The new agreement provides:

	77-78	78-79	79-80
Minimum Weekly Scale	\$325	\$350	\$385
Weeks	49	49	49
		(50 at Mgt.'s option)	
Vacation—(total)	5	5	6
Weeks rotated	(2)	(1)	(2)
Per diem	\$22	\$23	\$24
(double provided)			
Unscheduled Overtime	\$11.00	\$13.00	\$13.00
Scheduled Overtime (½ hr.)	9.50	11.00	11.00

Health and Medical Benefits include 90-day accumulation of sick leave, chiropractic coverage for the musicians, and long term disability insurance, commencing on the 181st day of sickness or injury.

The current Pension Plan will continue in force and beginning in 1978-1979 an individual account program will be initiated. Funding for the additional pension will come from an annual pension benefit concert to be mutually determined by the musicians and management.

An equal full service rotation provision was initiated, providing mandatory reduced instrumentation concerts for strings.

New guidelines for termination for artistic inadequacy were established. Musicians must now be conducted by the Music Director for a minimum of 8 services (including 2 subscription programs) in our hall before receiving a first warning from the Music Director. After consultation with the Music Director, there will be a time allowed for improvement which will include a minimum of 8 services (including 2 different subscription programs) conducted by the Music Director in our hall. A Review Panel of 15 musicians (7 principals—8 non-principal) will be elected by secret ballot at the beginning of each season. Ballots are deposited with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission and not counted until necessary. The Music Director and Musician will alternately strike 3 names from the panel. After the review is completed, the decision of the 9 musician panel is final and binding.

The Musicians will waive payment of 6 national broadcasts for a period of 1½ seasons. If our Management is unable to obtain sponsorship during this period for future programs, the broadcasts will not be continued.

A Split Orchestra agreement, Outdoor Concert Provisions with temperature guidelines (which will hopefully lead to a significant summer season), sectional rehearsal limitations, outside employment equalization, a bowings clause, leave of absence guidelines, and other various working provisions were included in the agreement.

The Musicians of the MSO express our appreciation to the officers of Local No. 8 for their continued support, especially Mr. Robert Couey, Secretary-Treasurer, who directly represented the Union at our meetings, and Mr. Frank Fiore, counsellor from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Our attorney was Michael C. Greenfield, whose skill and understanding of orchestral negotiations are exceptional. Michael worked with us as friend and attorney and we are most grateful for his untiring efforts.

Members of the Orchestra Committee were Andrea Leung, Chairperson, Michael Borschel, Vice-Chairperson, Stephen Basson, Fred Fuller, Glenda Lathrop, Paul Mehlenbeck, and Eric Steensrud.

Andrea Leung,
 Chairperson, Milwaukee Symphony
 Orchestra Players Council

NORTH CAROLINA RATIFIES NEW PACT

On September 16, after "playing and talking" for three weeks, the North Carolina Symphony ratified a new three year contract. The major provisions were as follows:

Scale—Previous minimum, \$265; 1977-'78, \$290; 1978-'79, \$315; 1979-80, \$345.

Per Diem—(meals only) old, \$15; 1977-'78, \$16; 1978-'79, \$20; 1979-'80, \$20.

There was also an increase in seniority pay. We were disappointed that there was no increases in either length of season or vacation time.

Other benefits gained are; a pension plan, life insurance and dependent health coverage, all to be instituted during the third year of the contract. Major gains were made in Audition Procedures, with the musicians handling preliminaries entirely.

An Appeal Committee will be established and will be the final authority on non-renewals and dismissals of tenured players. The Management and the Orchestra Committee will each submit a list of nine nominees, and the orchestra will elect six from each list. A thirteenth member will be chosen by the other twelve, generally the principal of the section involved. Any tenured musician whose non-renewal or dismissal is sustained will nevertheless be employed for the following full season. Probation is increased to two years.

Improvements in working conditions include some new travel provisions and a strengthened temperature clause. String section revolving, including violins switching between first and second, has until now been an informal agreement. This will now be included in the contract, to be administered by the Artistic Advisory Committee.

Unpaid leaves of up to one year for maternity or other purposes, are now available.

The Artistic Advisory Committee, in addition to meeting with the conducting staff, will now meet also with committees from the Society Board of Trustees. A major accomplishment is the establishment of a Liason Committee composed of musicians, to meet regularly with representatives of the Society Board of Trustees without the conducting staff.

The negotiations were marked by a congenial atmosphere, and at their conclusion both sides expressed renewed confidence in the collective bargaining process. The negotiations team consisted of the Orchestra Committee; Russ Olsen and Charlie Thomas of Local 500; and our counsel, Leonard Leibowitz.

Jan Gayer Hall, Chairperson,
North Carolina Symphony Orchestra Committee

H.R. 1042 SUPPORT INCREASES

Public support for the Richmond Bill, H.R. 1042, continues to grow. There were 79 House co-sponsors in the summer of 1977. The number on December 1st stood at 143. Fran Richards, of the National Council for Arts and Education, Inc. reports to us that the scheduling of hearings before the House Ways and Means Committee is imminent. It is hoped that the cosponsor list will reach at least 215 by that time.

A list of congressional co-sponsors is available upon request by writing N.C.A.E., 743 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. If your congressman is not listed, a letter urging co-sponsorship of the Richmond Arts and Education Bill, H.R. 1042, will help to keep the ball rolling.

NEW TWO YEAR RECORDING PACT SIGNED

Balloting for acceptance or rejection of the proposed phonograph record agreement has been completed. Eligible voters have approved the terms of the agreement. General increases in scale, health and welfare, doubling and royalty rate (for those who qualify) have been negotiated by the A.F. of M. The Symphony recording rate for a three hour session has been increased from \$116.60 to \$128.26 beginning Nov. 1, 1977 and to \$134.67 on Nov. 1, 1978.

NEW THREE YEAR CONTRACT IN ATLANTA

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra ratified its new contract by a bare 2/3 majority on Sept. 11, 1977, the day before the opening of the present season. This three-year agreement maintains the previous season length of 48 weeks with 4 weeks paid vacation throughout. The former minimum weekly salary of \$275 + \$5 EMG will increase over the next three years to: \$300 + 10, \$330 + 10, and \$360 + 15. This \$95 increase raises the minimum annual salary from \$13,440 to \$18,000. Other economic gains include increases in per diem, hospital room-rate coverage, doubling pay, and severance pay. Life insurance increases to \$10,000, and management's contributions to our newly established pension plan will be \$18,000, \$23,000, and \$28,000.

Many working conditions and fringe benefits will see improvements: e.g., the former 10 weeks of major sick leaves will be increased by one week for each two years of tenured service, and players will receive one day of "personal leave" per year. Touring conditions and audition procedures are better, and we now have some assurance of considerate scheduling. A clause guaranteeing cleanliness and safety of Atlanta Memorial Arts Center facilities has been inserted much to the relief of the ASO members who last November watched in horror as a six-year-old child toppled from her first row seat 25 feet into the lowered pit. The child, who miraculously survived, was ultimately responsible for this unusual clause, and ASO management and its parent organization, the Atlanta Arts Alliance, have been making gradual changes toward amore acceptable physical environment in which to work.

The only significant change totally in management's favor is the greater number of times in a week that "back-to-back" services may be scheduled. It is hoped that the resultant two additional services will provide the added flexibility management so earnestly sought, and that the spirit of co-operation and sincerity will continue to pervade our newly established monthly meetings with management. Thanks are due Local 148-462 President Karl Bevins and Secretary James Taylor for their strong support throughout, and special praise to our own Jere Flint for his articulate and effective handling of the job of spokesman for the ASO at the negotiating table.

Paul Brittan, ASO,
ICSOM Delegate

DENVER CONTRACT HANGS ON "SURVIVAL FUND" SUCCESS

Musicians of the Denver Symphony Orchestra ratified a contract proposal with strings attached, on November 13. (Vote 58-15) An emergency "Survival Fund" committee has been organized in an attempt to raise \$500,000 during the month of November to augment the salary contract offer of the Symphony Association. If the special fund drive does not reach its goal the musicians have the right, by December 3, to determine whether the original ratification vote will stand or be abrogated.

Governor Richard Lamm was instrumental in producing agreement between the Association and the musicians. Under a temporary arrangement the players are being paid under the salary terms of the expired contract, retroactive to November 9.

SENZA SORDINO WIDELY DISTRIBUTED

Senza Sordino is currently being received by individuals, committees, or management personnel in six Japanese orchestras, the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Calgary Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and several Australian Orchestras.

COMPARISON OF ORCHESTRA PENSION BENEFITS — PART II

Orchestra	Yearly Maximum Benefit	Retirement Age		Years of Service for Maximum Benefit
		Normal	Compulsory	
St. Louis—1977-78	\$4700	62	65 to 69*	30
1978-79	\$6500			

Comments: *Mandatory retirement of from 65 to 69 years of age entails consent of the Pension Committee composed of four members of the orchestra and four members of the society. In the event of a tie vote, an arbitrator who is a member of the A.F.M. makes the decision. After age 69 consent of the music director is necessary.

Survivor benefits are 50% of normal retirement benefit. It goes into effect after age 45 with 15 years of service.

The Association is permitted free services for two pension concerts including one rehearsal for each concert. They are also permitted one video cassette per year.

Cincinnati—1977-80 \$6000 65 none 30

Comments: Early retirement at age 55 with actuarially reduced benefits. Joint and 50% survivor annuity available pursuant to Federal Law.

Service will be credited from attainment of age 25 and completion of one year of service with the company, except for those musicians in the employ of the company on September 19, 1977. Accumulated benefits in the AFM-EPW and an old plan frozen in 1971 can accrue to a present total pension of up to \$7200.

Minnesota—1976-79 * 65 65 *

Comments: *Retirement is based on 1½% of musician's salary for each year of service.

Early retirement benefits may commence at age 62. If musician dies between age 60 and 65, surviving spouse receives 50% pension.

Services are provided for one pension concert per year.

Atlanta—1977-80 * 65 ** *

Comments: *Benefits are \$4.75 per month per year of service. Maximum benefits are equal to the sum of the average of three highest annual salary figures, but not more than a total of \$84,000.

**Retirement age of 65 is not compulsory if Music Director consents.

Spouse receives 50% survivor benefit for life.

Management may use four free services per year to be used for pension concerts. Management provides one rehearsal per concert.

Clarification of data on N.Y. Philharmonic pension in *Senza Sordino*, August, 1977:

Maximum benefit is \$300. per year of service, first available at age 60. Credit is given for each year until age 65, therefore, a musician retiring at age 65 with 40 years of service would receive an annual pension of \$12,000.

AGMA STRIKES N.Y. PHILHARMONIC

The American Guild of Musical Artists, the AFL-CIO union representing concert and opera artists and dancers, continues to chip away at an old American "tradition" that performing artists should indulge their gifts for the sheer joy of it and make their living at something more serious. One of their concerns is the field of choral music.

It has zeroed into the practice of engaging unpaid student choral groups. Management, AGMA claims, feels it has an obligation to provide performing experience to such groups, at no cost, to the disadvantage of professional choruses.

AGMA is presently at odds with the New York Philharmonic management on the issue. They have elicited from the Artistic Committee of the orchestra the following statement: "The musicians of the New York Philharmonic feel that professional choruses in New York best represent our standards and feelings about artistic quality, and that these choruses should be used exclusively in Philharmonic performances."

ICSOM OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

Irving Segall
Philadelphia Orchestra
1219 Glenview St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19111
Phone: (215) 745-4507

VICE CHAIRMAN

Robert Maisel
St. Louis Symphony
7 Locust Drive
Belleville, Ill. 62223
Phone: (618) 397-3051

SECRETARY

Stanley Dombrowski
Pittsburgh Symphony
R.D. No. 3
Export, Pa. 15632
Phone: (412) 327-0969

TREASURER

John Palanchian
New York City Opera
277 Walton St.
Englewood, New Jersey 07631
Phone: (201) 567-2631

EDITOR, SENZA SORDINO

Henry Shaw
Cincinnati Symphony
1577 Elizabeth Pl.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
Phone: (513) 242-7758

ICSOM AREA REPRESENTATIVES

EASTERN ORCHESTRAS

Frederick Zenone, National Symphony
2237 Williams Ave., Vienna, Va. 22180, Phone: (703) 560-1320

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

SOUTHERN ORCHESTRAS

Larry Hartshorn, Kansas City Philharmonic
6010 Melrose Lane, Shawnee, Kansas 66203, Phone: (913) 631-7993

Atlanta Symphony, Birmingham Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Florida Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Philharmonic, New Orleans Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Oklahoma City Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, San Antonio 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, Grant Park Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toledo 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 Ballet Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony.

COUNSEL

Sipser, Weinstock, Harper, Dorn and Leibowitz
380 Madison Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017
Phone: (212) 867-2100

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HENRY SHAW, Editor—Mailing address: 1577 Elizabeth Pl., Cincinnati, Ohio 45237

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