

# Senza Sordino

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## SOUNDS FROM THE POTOMAC

By Roger Ruggeri

Principal Bass, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra—Planning Section, Music Division, N.E.A.

Having enjoyed the sometimes pleasure of arduous meetings with various panels of the Music Section of the National Endowment for the Arts, I thought there might be some general interest among my orchestral colleagues regarding one person's view of federal funding for music. As I converse with many of my musician friends and acquaintances throughout the country, I occasionally sense that the N.E.A. is viewed either as a sort of cultural Pentagon that is crouched on the banks of the Potomac, plotting ways to begrudgingly provide minimal funding, or as a humanitarian agency that will ultimately lead us all to the green financial pastures of an artistic nirvana. In relation to these views, I have some good and bad news respectively.

First, the good news. Far from being a secrecy-shrouded agency that finds dark pleasures in plots and counterplots, the administration, staff and panelists that I have encountered are virtually uniform in their dedication to the Herculean task of achieving the greatest good with inadequate funding. Now that the period of enlightened leadership under Chairman Nancy Hanks has come to a close, everyone is looking forward to the agency's renewed growth potential under the new Chairman, Livingston Biddle. A writer by profession, the fifty-nine year old Biddle has long been involved in government arts funding. He played an important role in the drafting of the legislation that established the Endowment, was the Deputy Chairman between 1965 and 1967, and most recently served as the agency's congressional liaison.

Perhaps I should also mention something about the confidentiality of Endowment proceedings. Once a grant has been made by the Chairman, it becomes a matter of public record; prior to that time, it is subject to the vicissitudes of appropriation and so is best kept confidential. It doesn't take much to imagine the hue and cry that would arise if an organization planned its financial outlook on leaked information and then got a letter granting a lesser sum.

On the darker side, I am pleased to report that the news is only really disappointing for those who hope to be completely underwritten by the federal government. Although the idea of total government support is superficially attractive, it would take a radical change in political philosophy to achieve such an artistic state of affairs. Furthermore, there are serious questions about the wisdom of such a goal. In our particular circumstance, each of the orchestras and opera companies in which we perform is primarily a manifestation of the artistic life of the communities in which it is located. An important measure of our success as artistic organizations is the extent to which our communities support our activities through ticket sales and contributions. Supplementing this support should be county and state level funding; only at the end of this fiscal cycle does the federal government logically enter into the picture.

Fortunately for all, the federal government has played a leadership role in the funding of our organizations. By making project grants, some types of which must be matched by new monies from the communities, the N.E.A. has provided support while stimulating arts patronage. The gains have been impressive. This season

(1977-78) there are thirty-one orchestras with annual budgets in excess of \$1.5 million; these organizations have an average budget of slightly more than \$4 million and receive an average N.E.A. funding of about 3.5% of that budget. Strong gains have also been posted by several major opera companies and chamber orchestras throughout the country. It would seem to me that our major performing arts organizations should be viewed as "national treasures," and might therefore have an objective of tripling or quadrupling present federal funding levels.

Although this objective may seem unduly conservative, I believe that even it would be strongly opposed by those elected representatives who view our organizations as "elitist functions." They believe that we were created by and for a small minority of the total population and thus are not deserving of wide-based federal support. Many of these same representatives are in favor of a grass-roots approach to art and have, in fact, appropriated monies to support "previously unfunded groups" i.e. organizations whose budgets are below present N.E.A. guideline limits.

I feel that this charge of "elitism" merits a serious answer based upon a careful semantic distinction. We are elitist in that we engage in the highest pursuit of musical art. Our first priority is and must be *quality*. We stand proudly charged with this definition of the term. The other sense of the word implies that we perform only for the highbrow delights of a wealthy or intellectual coterie. Although we may protest loudly that we want to exercise our art for the broadest spectrum of mankind, we also realize that our organizations have not begun to reach the full potential audience for art music. The problem of making art music a vital part of American life will not be solved only by government, its agencies, our conductors, boards of directors and managements; the responsibility ultimately rests upon all of us. For we too, the people who make sound, hold vital keys to the success of the art music movement in America. All those other levels of management and government are there to help us reach our audiences and realize our own personal potential . . . even though it may not always seem that way.

We orchestra players are members of the largest single group of artists in each of our communities. Our status is what we make it; for too long we have tended to accept an older generation's view that orchestra playing is some sort of artistic second-class citizenship. We must accept responsibility for the quality of our individual performance and the quality of our ensembles. Our ranks contain a tremendous national resource of musical knowledge and technical expertise; we must constantly find ways to utilize this for the greater benefit of everyone. Not only should we find expanded opportunities for ourselves as orchestras, chamber musicians, soloists and teachers; but we must allow ourselves to be known as individuals to our audiences. There are many people who would not cross the street to hear a world-famous conductor lead a faceless horde through its paces, yet they would come to a concert or would support an organization in which *you* play . . . if only they knew you.

It is to all of our advantages to serve on orchestra committees,

to work toward gaining a voice in artistic policy decisions, and to aid in fund drives through donated services or modest contributions. Just as our own artistic prowess is achieved and maintained on a day by day basis, so is the cultural consciousness raised in our community and our nation.

As I was completing this article, I received in the mail the final report from The American Assembly, who met November 3-6, 1977 to discuss "The Future of the Performing Arts." Particularly appropriate was the section which read: "The people of the United States, and not merely the artists and the institutions in the arts, need a more clearly understood public policy about the arts. *If there are very large segments of the public unaware of this need—and there are—the need for taking leadership in analyzing and expressing public policy is today as urgent a mission on the part of professionals in the performing arts as any they have hitherto pursued in their own individual careers.*"

Roger Ruggeri  
Principal Bass, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Planning Section—Music Division, N.E.A.

### BROADCASTERS HIDING PROFITS?

The struggle to gain for performing artists the right to compensation for the commercial use of recorded performance is an on going one. The U.S. Copyright Office released a study in November which knocks into a cocked hat broadcasters' claims that they would fold if confronted by royalties. The study confirms the findings in a recent report by the UNESCO- International Labour Office.

The Copyright Office has dropped a "bombshell," according to *Billboard*. It suggests that the broadcasting industry earnings are not as low as they seem to be. What has passed for operating costs includes "large amounts of revenue going into owner-management bonuses, fees, commissions and into such categories as administration costs."

This kind of figure juggling can make a solvent station operation appear to be in the red. The icing on the cake is that despite claims of losses, most stations continue to operate. In fact, less than one tenth of one per cent of all stations ceased operation during the five years of the study.

This picture of "hidden profits" hopefully will be presented by the Register of Copyrights to Congress. She is soon to report on the feasibility of legislation which would award to performers royalties on the commercial use of recording performances.

### ON THE PASSING OF HAL DAVIS

Hal C. Davis, President of the American Federation of Musicians, died January 13, 1978. It was during President Davis' administration that ICSOM became of age, so to speak. Gradually, through those years, ICSOM was able to come to terms with the Federation, because the Federation gave to ICSOM the respect and recognition we were seeking.

Hal Davis played no small part in this process. He made himself available to us for meetings, and consulted with us on matters dealing with the symphony musician. He was responsible for the building of a mutual respect between ICSOM and the Federation. In every sense of the word, ICSOM has lost a friend.

The following note was sent to the New York Association for the Blind. *In memory of our esteemed brother and president, Hal C. Davis, we enclose a donation to your fine organization in keeping with the wishes of Hal C. Davis and his family.*

Vice President Victor W. Fuentelba will finish President Davis' term until elections are held at the AFM convention this summer. We wish the new President well, and hereby extend our best efforts to him, and sincerely hope that the relationship between ICSOM and the Federation will continue to grow.

Irving Segall

### 1977-78 SYMPHONY WAGE CHART

Most orchestras that guaranteed income for recordings or other electronic media services, pay such income in weekly increments. To facilitate comparison, the weekly salary in such orchestras are broken down into two figures.

	Weeks	Weekly Salary Plus E.M.G.	Annual Guaranteed Salary
ATLANTA	48	\$300.+10.	\$14,880**
BALTIMORE	45	300.	13,500.
BIRMINGHAM	30	160.60	4,818.
BOSTON	52	440.+20.	23,920.**
BUFFALO	44	320.	14,080.
CHICAGO	52	460.	23,920.
CINCINNATI	52	335.+20.	18,460.**
CLEVELAND	52	390.	20,280.
DALLAS	52	323.+5.	17,056.**
DENVER*	32	286.	12,012.
DETROIT	52	400.	20,800.
FLORIDA	25	214.	5,350.
GRANT PARK*	91½	337.60	3,207.
HARTFORD	34	116.74	3,969.
HONOLULU	36	272.50	9,810.
HOUSTON	52	320.+5. } 330.+10. }	17,290.**
INDIANAPOLIS	43	322.50	13,867.50
KANSAS CITY	35	262.	9,170.
LOS ANGELES	52	400.+40.	22,880.**
MILWAUKEE	49	325.	15,925.
MINNESOTA	50	345.+20. } 360.+20. }	18,625.**
NATIONAL	52	400.	20,800.
NEW JERSEY	28	285.	7,980.
NEW ORLEANS	38	337.	12,806.
NEW YORK	52	450.+20.	24,440.**
NO. CAROLINA	40	290.	11,600.
OAKLAND	80 serv.	39.50 per serv.	3,160.
OKLAHOMA CITY	31	205.	6,355.
OREGON	36	201.	7,236.
PHILADELPHIA	52	420.+30.	23,400.**
PHOENIX	33	165.	5,445.
PITTSBURGH	52	380.+20.	20,800.**
ROCHESTER	42	330.+5.	14,070.**
ST. LOUIS	52	320.+25.	17,940.**
SAN ANTONIO	34	245.	8,330.
SAN DIEGO	175 serv.	38. per serv.	6,650.
SAN FRANCISCO	52	385.+10.	20,540.**
SEATTLE*	40	295.	11,800.
SYRACUSE	38	232.	8,816.
TOLEDO	280 serv.	22. per serv.	6,160.
UTAH	46	330. A cont.	15,180.
CHICAGO LYRIC	15	425.	6,885. <sup>1</sup>
MET OPERA	44 <sup>1</sup>	458.38 <sup>2</sup>	20,168.72 <sup>3</sup>
N.Y.C. BALLET	25 <sup>1</sup>	360. <sup>2</sup>	9,000. <sup>3</sup>
N.Y.C. OPERA	28 <sup>1</sup>	395. <sup>2</sup>	11,060. <sup>3</sup>
S. F. BALLET	65 perf.	10.83 hr. re. 54.15 perf.	4,277.85

\*\*Annual Guaranteed Salary includes Electronic Media Guarantee or Recording Guarantee.

Grant Park\*—figures are for 1976-77 season. 1977-78 contract yet to be negotiated.

Denver\*—\$286. paid for 42 weeks, although working season is only 32 weeks in length.

Seattle\*—figures are for 1976-77 season. Orchestra presently playing while negotiating.

Chicago Lyric Opera—<sup>1</sup>) includes vacation pay of 8%.  
Met Opera—<sup>1</sup>) plus 7 weeks Supplemental Unemployment Benefits.

<sup>2</sup>)—not including rehearsal pay.

N.Y.C. Ballet—<sup>1</sup>) Includes 4 weeks Supplemental Unemployment Benefits.

<sup>2</sup>)—<sup>3</sup>) Does not include rehearsal pay.

N.Y.C. Opera—<sup>1</sup>) Plus tours. <sup>2</sup>)—<sup>3</sup>) not including rehearsal pay.

## NEW ORLEANS AGAIN "STRIKELESS"

The New Orleans Philharmonic began its current season in September 1977 under a new 3 year contract. Lengthy and difficult negotiations led to this agreement. As always, we received support and understanding from Local 174-496, whose president, David Winstein, led our bargaining team with vast experience and skill. The Orchestra Committee consisted of Karen Makas, John Hall, James Ummel, Stanley Weinstein, Vice-chairman, and Richard Erb, Chairman. The agreement was concluded without retaining legal counsel.

It is remarkable what the Symphony Society perceived to be in their best interest, if one considers their first bargaining demands. These demands had an ominously familiar ring, having been seen in other cities in very similar form: Reduction of number of players from 80 to 60; reduction of season length to 36 weeks; back-to-back youth concerts as one service; unlimited orchestra splitting coupled with an unlimited sub-contracting clause. Later in the negotiations the Society also demanded a clause which would have allowed them to totally suspend operations without warning or reason being given should it suit their convenience.

Fortunately, these demands were met with resolute rejection by the players and their representatives. To the credit of the Society and their negotiating team, who at all times demonstrated personal integrity, reason and a more forward-looking viewpoint prevailed. The new agreement was concluded without strike or lockout.

Terms of the new contract:

1977-78—9.05% AB increase, \$337 min., 38 weeks.  
 1978-79—7%-10% AB increase, \$360 min. (Cost of Living clause could raise min. up to \$370.) 39 weeks.  
 1979-80—7%-10% AB increase, \$385 min. (Cost of Living clause could raise min. up to \$407.) 40 weeks.  
 Guaranteed Annual Wage—\$12,806; at least \$14,040; at least \$15,400.

Terms of the previous contract were \$309 minimum, 38 weeks. Increases during the life of the new contract thus total \$76 to \$98 in scale, plus 2 weeks added to the season. Other improvements include increase in society paid instrument insurance, rotation of opera services, a one year unpaid leave of absence clause and improved and codified audition procedures. The only substantive concession on the part of the players was the addition of an extremely limited orchestra splitting clause. As of this writing it has not been utilized by the Society.

The New Orleans Philharmonic has never had a strike or lockout in its 43 year history, nor have we been forced to engage costly legal counsel. Whether this record remains unbroken will depend on the quality of the product we place before the public and our willingness to support our future negotiators and union representatives with determination.

Richard Erb, chairman,  
 New Orleans Orchestra Committee

## TREACHEROUS WEATHER K.O.'S MIDWEST AND EASTERN CONCERTS

The January 26th blizzard which swept across the midwest played havoc with orchestra schedules. The Indianapolis Symphony was participating in the Contemporary Music Festival held in Terre Haute when the storm hit. The final rehearsal and concert were cancelled and the orchestra was confined to a motel

from Thursday until late Saturday, unable to return home.

In Cincinnati, a rehearsal and two subscription concerts were cancelled. They were the first such concerts to be cancelled in at least 50 years. Walter Susskind, in Cincinnati for the week, was unable to reach New York to conduct a Carnegie Hall concert with the St. Louis Symphony on Thursday evening.

In Cleveland, a Thursday rehearsal and concert went down the drain. Winds caused the chill factor to drop to 100 degrees below zero there. It is reported that two children's concerts and a subscription concert could not be performed in Detroit. Pittsburgh reports a cancelled rehearsal. Certainly other cities can report similar conditions as the result of treacherous road conditions and high winds which accompanied the heavy snows that fell throughout the entire area.

The dust (or snow) had hardly settled on news of the Midwest storm when the paralyzing blizzard of February 6th hit the East coast. The cancellation syndrome repeated itself.

The Cleveland Orchestra could not get to Boston for a scheduled concert. Their instrument truck was mired in Albany as well. The Boston Symphony, unable to leave the city, cancelled out a home concert as well as three east coast concerts including Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center. The Hartford Symphony cancelled two rehearsals and as many concerts.

The New York Philharmonic lost a rehearsal on Feb. 7th. Philadelphia reported a two-day cancellation; a Kennedy Center concert and a rehearsal and concert in Baltimore. Prior to this season, Philadelphia players could recall only one concert ever cancelled. As in the Midwest blizzard, other orchestras not reporting, most assuredly were affected.

### Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Players Committee

Music Hall  
 1243 Elm Street  
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45210

December 24, 1977

Mr. Thomas Schippers  
 Conductor Laureate  
 Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra  
 1241 Elm Street  
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45210

Dear Maestro,

On behalf of all the members of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the CSO Players' Committee wishes to say "Thank you". Thank you for coming to Cincinnati and sharing your great musical talents with us. Thank you for the inspiration you instilled, for the challenge to do our best, and for believing in our potential greatness. Thank you for leaving over half of your worldly wealth to the orchestra's endowment fund.

It was difficult to understand your complex personality. You scared the hell out of some of us; angered all of us, sometimes; amazed us with your dash and dazzle; amused us with your unexpected pranks; and touched us with sudden flashes of love and generosity.

We are proud of the courage you displayed in battle against an implacable foe: cancer. Although you lost your life, you won our hearts.

Truly yours,

The CSO Players' Committee

*Alfred C. Myers*  
 Alfred C. Myers, Chairman  
*Milton Blalack*  
 Milton Blalack  
*William Platt*  
 William Platt  
*Richard Jensen*  
 Richard Jensen  
*George Hambrecht*  
 George Hambrecht

## THE MINORITY ORCHESTRAL TRAINING PROGRAM

*Minority needs for musical training, particularly with reference to symphony orchestra career preparation, are increasingly being recognized as matters of urgent concern, by both individual musicians throughout the country, and by ICSOM as an organization. Three different approaches to meeting this type of need are seen in the minority training efforts of the Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowship Program (New York), the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestral Training Program for Minority Students, and the Seattle Musicians Scholarship Program.*

*An explanation of The Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowship Program follows. The Los Angeles and Seattle programs will appear in the April issue of Senza Sordino.*

Nancy Griffin  
Seattle Symphony Orchestra

Recognizing that there are relatively few black musicians in our symphony orchestras today, the Music Assistance Fund began in 1965 to meet the need for aid to black music students whose financial problems presented a barrier to their advanced training and musical progress. The Fund, established by Mrs. David Rockefeller, is currently supported by NEA and Exxon, and has been instrumental in helping over 250 students through some 500 grants to 40 conservatories and music schools. A total of over \$300,000 in grants has been awarded to date, through this program for the training of individual musicians.

The Music Assistance Fund's Orchestral Fellowship program is a further effort at assisting talented young black instrumentalists who are working toward professional orchestra careers. The Fund itself has stressed the training of black musicians, while the Orchestral Fellowship Program seeks to provide experience and knowledge of orchestral repertoire through an apprenticeship program involving major, regional and metropolitan orchestras. The Fellowship Program is intended to incorporate the cooperation of orchestras whose managements and orchestra personnel are willing and interested in participating in the project. Fellowship holders would be added to participating orchestras during the regular subscription season, after first passing an audition procedure conducted according to individual orchestra requirements. ICSOM would be involved in the initial screening of candidates. Trainees would be expected to attend all rehearsals and performances of the orchestra, join the appropriate local union of the A.F. of M., and make monthly reports to the Fund. Their progress would be supervised by the principals of the orchestra sections in which they are playing. They would be encouraged to prepare for and take auditions for regular openings in various orchestras as they occur.

The participating orchestra is expected to pay Fellowship holders the equivalent of its minimum scale, and to extend normal fringe benefits with the exception of pension. The Music Assistance Fund will grant to the orchestra up to 75% of the cost of such stipends, but not over a total of \$10,000 per year per Fellow. Any monetary difference between the grant received from the Fund and total costs must be made up by the orchestral association. No commitments are involved for either party beyond the one-year fellowship period, although if the Music Director, the Fund, and the orchestra agree, a Fellow may continue for a second year. It is understood that fellowship holders must not supplant any orchestra member. Their presence is to be in addition to the basic contracted orchestra. So far the program has involved only string players.

Dr. Leon Thompson, Educational Director of the New York Philharmonic (Lincoln Center Plaza, Broadway at 65th, New York, N.Y., 10023) spoke on behalf of the Fund at the 1976 ICSOM Conference in Denver. Since that time ICSOM representatives Ralph Mendelson (N.Y. Philharmonic, viola) and John

Palanchian (New York City Opera, violin) along with several other consultants (members of the black arts community) have been instrumental in maintaining ICSOM contact with the Fund. The role of ICSOM in relation to the Orchestral Fellowship Program has included making recommendations from the 1976 Conference with the intent of assisting the Fund toward a workable approach in its selection of candidates and its relationship with various orchestras. At the 1977 Conference in Cleveland, ICSOM delegates passed an official resolution to endorse the program in principle and member orchestras were asked to pass similar resolutions at the local level. ICSOM stands ready to offer further cooperation to the Fund, and has, in addition, set up a committee to study and make recommendations on the general field of minority music training.

Meanwhile, the Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowship Program has the unique potential of providing meaningful orchestral experience for those black musicians who would like a professional symphony orchestra career and whose efforts toward such a career would be enhanced by the actual experience of working in a professional orchestra as a part of their background.

## OAKLAND SIGNS NEW AGREEMENT

Oakland musicians have been playing and negotiating since and before the '77-'78 season opened. On January 24, 1978 the musicians ratified an agreement.

The Players' Committee had as its goals the increase of services and keeping up with the rising cost of living. With the Association budgeting a deficit of almost \$350,000 for the current season it was naturally difficult to bargain for money. The Association is the target of much criticism due to its budgeting policies. With a total budget of \$1,326,700 only 35% is allocated for musicians' salaries. The inequities of the budget are admitted by the new manager, Harold Lawrence, who took over reins on December 1, 1977.

The current season has 80 contracted services for 86 players, plus at least twelve additional services for an average of 65 players. The next season will provide 86 services and the last season of the three year agreement will have 92 guaranteed services. Remaining constant during the term of the contract will be the wages of \$39.95 per service, the 86 contracted musicians, and the twelve additional services for 65 players.

Rehearsal hours, except for the dress rehearsal, were reduced from 2¾ to 2½ hours. Other changes, all initiated from our side, broadened the Audition Committee, inserted a new definition of "Full Symphonic Service," provided for free parking for all services, and improved run-out conditions.

Although opposition was vocal regarding the idea of maintaining purchasing power by increasing work, our situation as seen by the majority of players is such that if we can encourage the Association to increase our employment, we will be going in the right direction.

Negotiations were led by Jerry Spain, President of Local #6. A quorum of the Players' Committee was always present.

Donn Schroder  
Oakland Symphony Players' Committee

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