

# Senza Sordino

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## LOS ANGELES SIGNS THREE YEAR PACT

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra ratified its new master agreement on May 24th, 1978. This is almost four months before expiration of the current contract (September 17, 1978).

The entire series of negotiation meetings were conducted without legal counsel with Ernest Fleischman, Executive Director, Anthony Steel, Managing Director and Phyllis Elliot, Executive Assistant on the side of management. The Orchestra Committee consisted of Irving Bush, Walter Ritchie, David Breidenthal, William Lane and Miles Zentner. Union Local No. 47 President Max Herman and Local No. 47 Trustee, Vance Beach, negotiated on behalf of the orchestra. Major improvements made in the new agreement are as follows.

### Basic Salary

1978-1979	\$440. per week
1979-1980	\$480. per week
1980-1981	\$520. per week (1st 6 months)
	\$530. per week (2nd 6 months)

### 1. (a) Audio Electronic Guarantee

1978-1979	\$2500. per contract year, \$48.08 per week
1979-1980	\$2500. per contract year, \$48.08 per week
1980-1981	\$3000. per contract year, \$57.69 per week

The electronic guarantee includes records, radio and T.V.  
The electronic guarantee will be paid on a weekly basis.

All raises are across the board.

### Vacation Weeks—No Change

In each of the three years, there shall be eight weeks paid vacation. The eighth week of paid vacation shall be scheduled at any time during the contract year at the discretion of management.

### Pension

1978-1979	normal retirement benefit is \$750. per month.
1979-1980	normal retirement benefit is \$825. per month.
1980-1981	normal retirement benefit is \$900. per month.

Present and future pensioners are to be paid at the new pension rates.

### Tour Provisions

On a Road Tour, there will be no more than seven (7) consecutive days of Rehearsal, Concert, or travel, without a free day.

### Per Diem

Breakfast Allowance	\$ 4.50
Lunch Allowance	\$ 6.50
Dinner Allowance	\$11.50
Hotel Allowance	\$28.50 (Domestic Tours Only)

Foreign tour per diem negotiated before each tour.

### Touring Provisions

The current practice of management paying for hotel rooms on a single occupancy basis will be continued.

Per Diem is to be adjusted to reflect the cost of living increases at the beginning of each contract year.

The out of pocket allowance is increased to \$30.00 per week. If surface travel exceeds five hours, a penalty of \$5.00 for each fifteen minutes.

Accidental death and dismemberment insurance to be increased to \$150,000.

### Insurance

Life Insurance.	Increased to \$30,000.
Health Insurance.	Continuance of management paid medical insurance plans with extended benefits. Extended psychiatric coverage.

Dental Insurance. Management paid dental insurance plan with increased benefits.

Disability Insurance. Management paid disability insurance plan.

### Severance Pay

Severance pay has been substantially increased beginning with the third year of service to a maximum of \$5,000.00 after ten or more years of service.

### Seniority Pay

Seniority pay is \$5.00 per week after the first five years of service and \$10.00 per week after ten years and \$15.00 per week after fifteen years of service. Seniority pay would be part of basic salary.

### Radio Broadcasts

No free local non-commercial radio broadcasts.

Irving Bush, Chairman  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Orchestra Committee

## PRESIDENT FUENTEALBA TO ADDRESS ICSOM CONFERENCE

The agenda of the 1978 ICSOM Conference has been finalized except for suggestions from the floor of the Conference. Victor W. Fuentealba, recently elected president of the American Federation of Musicians, will address the conference on Tuesday, August 29th.

Other highlights of the conference will be: A lecture by I. Philip Sipser on the new Age Discrimination Act. Workshops dealing with the following subjects:

- Negotiation Techniques
- Pension, Health and Welfare Plans
- Working Conditions and the Quality of Life in Orchestras
- Contract and committee administration

Caucuses are planned for Major, Regional and Opera and Ballet orchestras. A special seminar on pension funding consolidation, to which trustees and management representatives have been invited, will be conducted by Phil Sipser.

Opening session is August 28th, at 2 P.M. at the Master Hosts Inn, 950 Hotel Circle, San Diego.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Shaw,

I would like to add a few comments of my own to your admirable analysis of "Our Decibel Dilemma" in the April, 1978 issue of *Senza Sordino*.

Players in military bands suffer from the same problems you mentioned in your article, but their situation is complicated by a number of factors. For example:

1. Band music in general contains more loud passages and relies to a much greater extent on brass and percussion than does orchestral music. On top of that, the typical band contains half again as many players of these instruments as does an orchestra. Granting that all of those six or eight or even ten trumpet players are not of "symphony" calibre and power, they still provide a much greater number of sound sources, which means that a greater number of people end up with trumpets sitting directly behind them.
2. The majority, perhaps even the "vast majority," of military bands operate in unsatisfactory rehearsal rooms. These rooms are often crowded, reducing the distance between high-volume instruments and the ears of the unfortunates around them. They often lack an effective form of acoustical treatment, which is of great importance because most of them were never designed to be rehearsal rooms in the first place. The most common faults are bare brick or concrete walls and ceilings that are too low. Any musician who has played with a large ensemble in a low-ceilinged room can vouch for the effect the ceiling height has on volume levels.
3. Military bands, like almost any other occupational category, harbor a goodly percentage of frustrated people. It is unfortunate but true that many such frustrated people seek a form of release by playing louder than is really necessary. The perpetrators of such excesses are rarely sympathetic to the complaints of their victims, and in fact some of them seem to be attempting to demonstrate their musicianship or manhood or whatever by producing extraordinary quantities of sound.
4. Many commander-conductors of military bands are unsympathetic too, perhaps for the same reasons mentioned above. They resist changes of seating and physical arrangement that could do much to alleviate the problems, and are rarely interested in expensive acoustical treatment of rooms. One officer's reaction to a complaint may be typical: "I sat in front of the trumpets for X number of years, and so can you." Requests to wear earplugs or filters generally fall on deaf ears (you should forgive the expression), and indeed such protection has sometimes been flatly prohibited.
5. A musician who receives no satisfaction from his immediate commander is faced with another dilemma. Complaints to higher authority are complicated and may involve considerable risk of retaliation, both from officers (who often seem to feel threatened) and from an occasional fellow-musician of the loud-making variety.

One of the basic issues here is "How loud is loud?" Or more precisely, is it really necessary to play as loud as we often do? Whenever the matter is broached, somebody inevitably assumes the defensive attitude and asks, "What would you have us do? We can't play everything *mezzo-forte*." Such a response is dodging the issue, and nobody is seriously suggesting such a solution anyway. Ideally, good judgment, common sense, and a reasonable respect for the rights and health of others could be expected to resolve many of these problems; but since good judgment, like good taste, cannot be legislated, something will probably have to be done in

the way of official guidelines and procedures. This leads to two questions:

- What are the real rights of military musicians, and who can help protect them in the absence of unions?
- Can the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health be called upon to investigate the matter and prescribe guidelines concerning the protection of the health of military personnel?

Comments and suggestions from readers and official agencies would be welcomed.

(Editor's Note: The writer wishes to remain anonymous. Please send comments to the Editor of SENZA SORDINO.)

A former member of the Buffalo Philharmonic writes:

*Often during the time I have been in the orchestra, poor stage preparation has resulted in dangerously loud percussion exposure for some second violinists. This past February, playing on tour on a cramped stage in Fort Lauderdale, I received physical damage from the incredible brutal percussion in the Carl Ruggles "Men and Mountains".*

*I was sitting last stand, second violin, outside, and was closest to the percussion—literally inches away from the cymbal and bass drum. I had to leave the stage. I was dizzy and shivering. When, after a couple of months had passed and my ears still would ring, buzz, and not tolerate even normal levels of volume, I saw a specialist. His findings were: no permanent damage, but temporary damage; may take several months to remedy itself.*

*I have not asked the society to make any amends for the mental anguish, physical pain, and depression that a musician whose hearing has been impaired must sustain (I must use cotton even to practice by myself). The conditions in the orchestra were so bad, and the management so uncooperative, that I have quit the orchestra.*

## NEVILLE MARRINER NAMED MUSIC DIRECTOR OF MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Internationally renowned British conductor Neville Marriner has been appointed Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra beginning with the 1979-80 season. Klaus Tennstedt was named Principal Guest Conductor and Leonard Slatkin accepted the new position of Artistic Director of the Orchestra's summer season. Tennstedt and Slatkin will assume their new posts in 1979-80. Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, whose resignation as Music Director of the Orchestra after a 19-year tenure takes effect in August 1979 has been invited to continue his relationship with the Orchestra for a two-year period in the newly created position of Conductor Emeritus. Henry Charles Smith will remain as Associate Conductor.

Marriner accepted a three-year contract which calls for at least 10 weeks in his first season, increasing to a minimum of 12 and 14 weeks in the second and third years. Tennstedt's three-year contract will provide for four weeks in the 1979-80 season and five weeks in each of the following two seasons.

The Search Committee, made up of members of the Board, the Orchestra and the Association's management, spent more than seven months of study and research. The Committee requested the Conductor Evaluations of all potential candidates and the evaluations strongly influenced the final decision.

The Orchestra members are anticipating a mutually rewarding collaboration with Messrs. Marriner, Tennstedt, and Slatkin in attaining an even higher level of artistic excellence for the Minnesota Orchestra.

Charles Schlueter  
Minnesota Symphony Orchestra

## WANTED: THE IDEAL READER

The professional symphony orchestra is a complex institution. In the end, the inter-relationship of conductor, musician, management team and listener determines the success of the end product, the performance. Existing in this inter-relationship is the arts reviewer as well, assessing the product as a news function. The arts reviewer assumes a responsibility in its own way as important as that carried by the personnel on stage, back stage or in the office. The nature of the critique can be a very influential factor in the success or failure of a career or in the economic stability of a musical institution.

We applaud the honest, knowledgeable and literary talent exhibited in the profession. What becomes troublesome is how to handle the unfair, badly written, and, at times vicious review. Musicians are reluctant to resort to rebuttal by correspondence (or for that matter any other means). As a practical matter the musician is immeasurably better off being on good terms with the press than risking a bad relationship.

The reviewer, at times, is prone to reflect on his professional responsibilities as we are on our own, and in this regard a well written article by Roger Downey, a reviewer on the staff of the Seattle magazine, *The Weekly*, is well worth bringing to your attention. Mr. Downey writes:

"We are constantly tempted to over-write (and underthink), to go a bit too far in making claim to knowledge we don't possess, to politic for causes we think to be good and attempt to trip up the bad, to be nasty to someone we don't like without any fear that they will dare be nasty back.

Newspaper reviewers, unless they are very vigilant, find themselves playing the role of Arbiter of Taste; most of us are singularly ill-qualified for the role. Whenever a critic is challenged on the large element of fakery inherent in this role, the excuse is always heard: its not the critic that sets up as Arbiter, but the public that forces the title on the unwilling recipient. A review we say is not meant to be more than one person's opinion; if only the reader would understand that, the problem would go away.

Disingenuous or not, the reply is beside the point. When someone claims in print to know something, readers are going to believe that person, so long as his incapacity is not made too manifest. (it's a truism that if sportswriters, themselves a pretty ripe breed, wrote about sports on the level of expertise possessed by the average critic, they would be out of a job in the customary two weeks.) Newspaper editors, sad to say, don't often know enough to evaluate their own personnel, and as long as the advertising department doesn't scream too loudly, prefer not to mess with matters of taste, delicacy, and personal opinion.

Lacking a demanding, knowledgeable public, perhaps the best thing any of us can do is to invent one: to imagine a sort of ideal reader, willing to hear us out but ready to question the least fuzziness of thinking, the smallest loss of clarity, the slightest sign of malice.

My own ideal reader is well-educated, with broad enough interests to be able to catch me when I wander out of my depth in search of an analogy; at the same time quite uninformed about the specific matter at hand, so that any response comes from the senses and the gut rather than from a faint memory of Drama 101 or Introduction to Music. My reader is eager to be entertained by my writing—in fact, insistent that I be entertaining—but unwilling to settle for cheap shots or low blows however prettily packaged.

Above all, my reader insists that I be clear and exact. A performance was "feeble"? Very well, give us an example of said feebleness. A piece of business was awkward? OK, what should replace it? My reader insists that I know what I feel and think myself and be able to justify those feelings and thoughts, before paying any more attention to me than to the tittle-tattle overheard

in the lobby at intermission. Tittle-tattle has its place, but it does no one any good to pretend that it is anything more elevated.

Reviewing is an art, I suppose: parasitic, but with its own rules and canons of ethics nonetheless. But since it is parasitic, since it does depend for its very existence on the efforts, knowledge, training, and dedication of others, the final thing I would ask my ideal reader to demand is that we put a tenth as much effort into our work as the artists we feed on do into theirs. Since we are generally paid so much better to tear down what they build than they are to construct it, it doesn't seem too much to ask."

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Senza Sordino* is the last of the current season. An annual Editor's report will be made at the ICSOM conference in San Diego and in October the process of bringing orchestra news to our members renews itself.

I believe that some words on the state of *Senza Sordino* and suggestions for improvement of the newsletter is in order. It is a most important link in the organizational structure. It is ICSOM's umbilical cord feeding organizational and orchestra news to the entire membership. What appears on the pages of *Senza Sordino* to a great degree influences your concept of ICSOM and judgment of its value to the orchestra musician. Ideally, it should keep you posted on events elsewhere in the profession. Delegates many years ago were so sensitive to the maintenance of a healthy newsletter that, while other ICSOM officers are elected every two years, the editorship of *Senza Sordino* requires annual election, ostensibly to impress the editor with his obligation, and to enable the membership to call someone "out of the bullpen" with a minimal time lapse.

*Senza Sordino* functions best when its editor *edits*, selecting articles and material not only from the musical world around us but *primarily* from the members of ICSOM. Unfortunately, the bottleneck seems to be in the "crawl" of letters and material from you, the members. Every *Senza Sordino* editor has pointed to this apparent deficiency in the production of a truly representative newsletter. We need more musician input. Organizational dogma is a poor substitute for grass root opinion and paraphrased newspaper articles can't match news from the orchestra itself.

Aside from informing each other, the newsletter presents a desirable opportunity. A sizeable readership exists as a result of private subscription. It consists in part, of conductors and managers; a wide assortment of Arts agencies, both private and governmental; A. F. of M. officials; a host of university music libraries as well as both the Chicago and New York Public libraries; a large contingent of foreign orchestras, either through their musicians or managements (four orchestras in Tokyo alone, both the London Symphony and the London Philharmonic—even an orchestra as far removed from us as the Hong Kong Philharmonic); authors, critics and editors of other periodicals.

It is obvious then, that there is an outside interest in what the U.S. symphony orchestra musician has on his mind. We offer you the pages of *Senza Sordino* to express yourself.

Each year at the ICSOM conference your delegate is reminded to provide me with material. A full page of suggestions is made available to him. In too many cases that last adieu before he leaves the conference table is the last contact that your editor has with him or her until the next yearly meeting. An occasional trade agreement report is not enough. We expect more. You can help immeasurably by providing pertinent articles, anecdotes, and other material. The *Decibel Dilemma* article in the June issue of *Senza Sordino* was totally the result of data accumulated from articles sent to me. A call from Brad Buckley, St. Louis Symphony, telling me of Jim Meyer's revealing survey referred to in the D.D. article, did the rest.

Your only reward will be in the enjoyment of contributing. All we promise to do is spell your name correctly.

Henry Shaw, Editor

## HONOLULU SIGNS FOR TWO YEARS

After a very tough and disappointing contract negotiation two years ago (3 week lockout), we are pleased to report that things have greatly improved here in Honolulu. We just recently completed several months of talks and even though our service weeks and wages are not what we had hoped for we feel pleased with a few other important gains.

In addition to our Audition and Review committee already in force, we have formed an Artistic Advisory Committee composed of five persons who will meet with the Music Director and act as liaison between the director and orchestra to discuss programs, guest artists and guest conductors.

Of even greater importance is a Director Selection Representative who will serve as a representative and voting member of the Selection Committee of the Society. The representative to the Selection Committee will attend all meetings "pertaining to and regarding artistic matters and decisions in the selection of a new Music Director or Associate." This is extremely important to us as we are in the process of finding a new Music Director. Mr. Robert Karol (previously with the Boston Symphony Orchestra) is our elected representative.

Our 1977-78 contract called for 36 weeks at \$272.50 minimum. The new two year contract contains the following changes. 36 weeks at \$300. minimum in '78-'79; 38 weeks at \$320. minimum in '79-'80. Two more players will be added in the '79-'80 season. The Society will pay the insurance premiums of instruments up to \$25,000; run-outs of over 3½ hours will count as two services and there will be NO donated services.

Many thanks to our negotiation team; Herb Ward, Donna Kats and Doug Buchanan and to our Local 677. Thanks to I. B. Peterson, Emilia Bettencourt and Ray Tanaka for their extremely diligent work. Also thanks to our manager, Mr. Robert Bickley who showed us consideration and respect.

Louise Solmssen, Chairperson  
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra

## DENVER MUSICIAN ELECTED TO ORCHESTRA BOARD

The Denver Symphony Association Board of Trustees has become one of the country's few major orchestra boards with musicians from the orchestra in its ranks.

Elected were Louise Graber, a violist for the orchestra for 14 years until she had to retire last March for medical reasons. She was the Chairman of the musicians' union bargaining committee during last fall's seven-week lockout. Also elected were David Abosch, first oboist and Gunter Jacobius, the orchestra's first bassoonist.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING? — DEP'T.

On July 12, the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee (Segall, Palanchian, Buckley and Zenone), met at Federation headquarters in New York with president Fuentealba and Bob Crothers to discuss proposals for a new Video Tape Cassette agreement. The concept of revenue sharing for musicians was discussed along with "up front" money. A full report will be made in San Diego.

On June 5th Executive Board members Fred Zenone and Henry Shaw attended the American Symphony Orchestra League convention where they engaged in a panel discussion with several major symphony orchestra managers. There were approximately fifty managers in attendance for the two hour session. Views on special recording session clauses; job satisfaction among symphony musician; and ways that the A.S.O.L. and ICSOM could work together to secure more Government funding for symphony orchestra, were exchanged in the course of the afternoon meeting. The convention was held in Chicago.

Out of the discussion has come a planned meeting in New York on August 8th between a group of managers from the major orchestras and the ICSOM Electronic Media Committee. An exchange of ideas concerning recordings as well as other media problems will take place.

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