

# Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

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## TINNITUS SUFFERER? *There's Hope For Relief*

Dear Henry:

I am writing to ask if you would be interested in an article about hearing for *Senza Sordino*. Maybe I mentioned it in the course of a conversation at the Minneapolis ICSOM Conference. For several years I have had hearing problems such as ringing in the ears and loss of the high overtones. I consulted at the University of Minnesota Hearing Center and they fitted me with an aid that I used for a time in the orchestra. It was better than nothing, but still not very satisfactory. In December and January things got so bad that I seriously thought of getting out of the orchestra at the end of the season.

The end of January I consulted with David Preves, Vice President of Starkey Laboratories, a hearing aid designing and manufacturing company. Dave is the son of Milton Preves, Principal Violist of the Chicago Symphony, and a good enough violinist that Reiner wanted him in the Chicago Symphony. He occasionally plays with the Minnesota orchestra. Anyhow, Dave and Dr. Barry Voroba, an audiologist with the company, and himself an amateur violinist, are using me as a subject in research on tinnitus; ringing in the ears. They fitted me with an aid for each ear which does three things at once; overrides the ringing, enhances the high tones and suppresses the lower ones. So far it has been the difference between day and night, and I am almost certain that I can play two more seasons, as I had planned.

The trouble with using hearing aids in an orchestra are at least two fold. The tone quality can be reedy, and when there are fortissimi and sforzandi you get blasted. I have been very comfortable using these Starkey aids in things like Zarathustra and the Mahler 3rd, to name two of the loudest pieces we have done this season. The tone quality of the aids is not bad (maybe there is the factor of getting used to hearing high overtones) but Dave tells me that there are 10,000 possible adjustments that can be made on the Starkey hearing aids. To give you an idea how advanced that is, hearing aid companies in Great Britain offer only three settings.

I think that an article on the state of the art in hearing aids and research would be of great interest to *Senza* readers.

*Editor's Note: In the interest of providing information to those orchestra musicians who may be affected by tinnitus, I encouraged the writer, who prefers anonymity, to supply additional facts. The following paragraphs are a collaborative effort on the part of that musician and David Preves.*

*It is to be understood that the printing of the article does not constitute an endorsement for Starkey Laboratories, however, we feel that the dissemination of the information contained in it to be of value to our readers.*

In the environment of this day and age, there are many people who suffer significant hearing loss. Two common forms of hearing difficulties are loss of sensitivity to high tones or frequencies, and noises in the ears or head, called tinnitus. It is estimated that 37,000,000 Americans suffer from tinnitus, and musicians are particularly vulnerable because of the high sound

levels and stress on the job.

Tinnitus is regarded as a symptom, and not as a disease in itself. Ninety percent of people so afflicted also have hearing loss. Sometimes it is a temporary condition and may be caused by a wax build-up in the ear canal, too much smoking, coffee, drugs in the — mycin group, aspirin, fatigue, hypertension, stress, head injuries and even the common cold. Tinnitus can also be caused by a more serious condition such as a tumor, so a medical evaluation is very important.

To date there has been little headway made to identify all of the causes of tinnitus, and up to recently, there was little hope of relief for most tinnitus sufferers. In 1970, the American Tinnitus Association came into being. That organization was started by a group of researchers at Kresge Laboratories, which is a part of the University of Oregon Health Science Center, Portland, Oregon. Besides Kresge Labs, Audiotone Co., Phoenix, Arizona and Starkey Laboratories, Minneapolis, Mn., are among the domestic institutions committed to research into prosthetics for tinnitus. Their emphasis is in defining the problem and developing devices to relieve the discomfort and disability of sufferers. These companies are well known to audiologists and hearing aid dispensers, nationally and internationally.

The Starkey Laboratories research team seeks musicians who have hearing problems because they have well trained ears and also can clearly express verbally what they hear. To take part in the research, the subjects must first have physician's certificates stating that their tinnitus is not medically treatable. After an interview and filling out a questionnaire, they are given audiological tests in a sound-proof room to measure their ability for identifying sounds and words. Then they are tested on a TINNITUS RESEARCH AUDIOMETER (TRA), a machine developed by Dr. Voroba, which helps to determine the pitch, type of noise and loudness of the tinnitus. In many tinnitus cases, sufferers can be helped by hearing aids especially designed to amplify environmental sounds which fall near the frequencies of the tinnitus. For some cases, a masking type of aid (tinnitus masker) may be helpful. This kind of device produces a sound that is designed to override or mask the tinnitus. Frequently, the versatile combination tinnitus masker/hearing aid provides more of the desired relief than a tinnitus masker alone. The readings from the TRA may be used for the prescription of a hearing aid that is custom designed for each subject's tinnitus. After a hearing aid is fitted, subjects are asked to return for further testing and evaluation.

Musicians, particularly orchestra players, have very special and difficult hearing aid requirements because of the great dynamic and tone quality ranges they are subject to and must react to while playing. With some behind-the-ear type aids, in order to set the aid at a high enough level to amplify the high frequencies, fortissimi and sforzandi can be painful. In-the-ear aids largely take care of that problem.

A musician using a hearing aid for the first time must be patient and experiment. Previously he or she may not have heard high frequencies for awhile, and sound is apt to seem nasal

## 1981 ICSOM CONFERENCE PROMISES STIMULATING AGENDA

The ICSOM Conference will be held this year from August 24 to August 28 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Conference should be of unusual interest. In addition to our normal lengthy working agenda there will be five areas of major interest.

Dr. David Coplan has begun a very serious study of symphony orchestras and orchestra musicians. The study will deal with fulfillment of professional goals and musicians' self concepts. Dr. Coplan will be at the Conference to work and to explain his project proposal.

The women's Caucus will continue the work begun last year. They will contact individual delegates before the Conference so that those delegates can come prepared.

Mr. James Decker will present to us a new idea in the area of auditions. He is co-operating with interested teachers and musicians in a project to initiate video auditions.

The centerpiece of the Conference will be a day long seminar on the Quality of Work Life in American Orchestras. Participants will be Mr. Albert K. Webster — Managing Director of the New York Philharmonic, Dr. Leonard Oseas — Professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, and Christopher Keene, conductor of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

There will be a progress report on an extended continuing negotiation for a contract under which all kinds of video products will be made by symphony, opera and ballet companies. There is much new information to be considered in the video area.

In addition we will run workshops as we hear from you as to your needs. Certainly we will have, for new delegates, the workshop on contract negotiations given by ICSOM Counsel. We would like to hear from member orchestras about areas in which they feel the need for workshops and sharing information with other orchestra delegates.

The Conference will be held at:



The Pfister Hotel and Tower  
424 E Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202  
Phone (414) 273-8222

Hotel registration cards will be mailed very soon. You are urged to return them as soon as possible to insure room reservations. It will be to your advantage to make travel arrangements as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the considerable savings in air fares. We look forward to seeing all your delegates at a stimulating Conference. Send your resident workaholic.

Fred Zenone  
ICSOM Chairman

## MOAB'S SUPPORT WIDESPREAD

The ads below are from the program of a concert played by the Utah Symphony Orchestra in Moab, Utah. To that community's credit their support is from cradle to grave (and everything in between).

<p><b>Planned Parenthood</b></p> <p><i>We are proud to help bring the Utah Symphony Orchestra to Moab</i></p> 	<p><b>Four Corners Mental Health</b></p> <p>is pleased to help support such an enriching occasion</p>	<p><b>Hefner Funeral Home</b></p> <p>welcomes the Utah Symphony Orchestra</p> 
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## MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA RESPONDS TO IRRESPONSIBLE CRITICISM

Last January 15th the *Minneapolis Star* printed a review which was highly critical of conductor Klaus Tennstedt and a concert he had just conducted with the Minnesota Orchestra. The review was written by Kathy Grandchamp, a local free-lance writer whom the *Star* had engaged to write music reviews for several months. Although Ms. Grandchamp had written some questionable reviews in the past, this particular one was so full of factual and critical inaccuracies that many members of the orchestra decided to take some critical actions of their own.

Several musicians wrote individual letters of protest to the editor of the *Star*, and one member of the orchestra wrote a letter which was signed by a total of 63 musicians. Following is the text of that letter:

**TO THE EDITOR:** *As members of the Minnesota Orchestra, we wish to express our collective outrage at a criticism written by Kathy Grandchamp that appeared in the Jan. 15 STAR. We strongly question the credibility of the STAR in engaging a free-lance writer who knows so little about her subject matter. A cursory glance through the program notes given all who attended the Jan. 14 Minnesota Orchestra concert would have revealed to Ms. Grandchamp that the solo movement in the LARGO movement of Dvorak's "New World Symphony" was not an oboe, as she stated, but an English horn.*

*Yet, there is an issue to consider here which transcends Grandchamp's ignorance of simple fact. The woman is unable to distinguish a great performance from a bad one. She opened her review with the question of whether conductor Klaus Tennstedt was "losing his touch" and went on to state her opinion that Maestro Tennstedt had nothing "new to say about" the "New World Symphony." (Earlier she had criticized the piece's inclusion in the program, referring to it as a "warhorse" capable of "bringing down the house even with a high school orchestra.")*

*She closed her review with her assertion that Tennstedt's interpretation of the last two movements of the symphony "reverted to being simply boistrous, in a rather vacuous way" and that the finale "seemed to have nothing to say, but said it loudly."*

*The "New World Symphony" is performed a great deal by many orchestras, and as such it may qualify as what Grandchamp terms a "warhorse." However, to summarily dismiss it as such and to say no more is to ignore the true greatness of the work. The Minnesota Orchestra has performed the piece on many occasions, but the work's power and beauty have never been so consummately illuminated than in our performance with Maestro Tennstedt. The spontaneous ovations from the 2,200-plus members of the audience and the 82 members of the Minnesota Orchestra on stage at the close of the concert constituted an eloquent testament to the depth of the performance and the profundity of Tennstedt's interpretation.*

*Klaus Tennstedt has consistently inspired the Minnesota Orchestra to great performances since his first performance here six years ago. The Minnesota Orchestra is forced to compete with the orchestras of Berlin, London, Boston, New York and Philadelphia (to name a few) for Maestro Tennstedt's time and talent, and it is lamentable that the Minnesota Star prints insulting columns by a writer who not only displays a dearth of simple musical knowledge but also demonstrates a total lack of critical acumen.*

*To the members of the Minnesota Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt's knowledge and genius are not in question. However, the critical perceptiveness of Kathy Grandchamp and the editorial integrity of the Minneapolis Star most certainly are.*

*William Schrickel,  
and 62 other members of the  
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On January 21st the letter appeared in the *Star* under the caption, DVORAK, CONDUCTOR DIDN'T DESERVE CRIT-

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ICS'S CAVILING, ORCHESTRA CLAIMS. On the same page were four additional letters expressing disgust with the review. Ms. Grandchamp's byline has not appeared in the *Star* since the publication of her infamous review. It would appear that the vociferous expression of protest which greeted this irresponsible review convinced the editors of the *Star* that credibility is just as important in the reviewing of the concerts as it is in the reporting of "hard news."

The members of the Minnesota Orchestra decided it was time to speak out against shoddy criticism, and the results of our protest were most heartening. Any other orchestras being subjected to irresponsible reviewing are encouraged to use the tremendous power of the press to voice their own opinions and stand up for responsible critical writing.

### LOCAL 5 AND D.S.O. BREAK NEW GROUND IN UNION-ORCHESTRA RELATIONS

During the past year, Local 5, A.F. of M., and the members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra have made several improvements in joint communication and cooperation. Effective first, was a resolution passed at the October, 1980, semi-annual meeting, to create the Executive Board post of Second Vice President for Symphony Affairs. This officer is to be elected by the union membership at large from a slate of DSO-nominated, DSO members. To fill the post until the next general election, the orchestra elected Joseph Skrzynski, who has been a member of Local 5 for 33 years and a trombonist in the DSO for 29 years.

Secondly, in the summer of 1980, the Orchestra Committee, chaired by Douglas Cornelson, asked the union to pay the orchestra's contract-related expenses out of the monies the orchestra contributes to Local 5 in work dues. Many of the items in their request had been paid by the union for several years, and the rest had been paid by individual assessment of the musicians. The orchestra request amounted to \$32,500 per year, plus approximately \$23,500 for expenses related to negotiations and a pledge of \$15,000 to a contingency fund. This compares to the 1980-81, orchestra work dues contribution of a least \$106,000. Work dues in Detroit were 3% before, and are 4% since, January, 1981.

Both the Orchestra Committee and the Negotiating Committee met with the Executive Board several times to discuss the orchestra proposal. Then on March 10, 1981, the following motion carried unanimously:

*"Local 5 agrees to pay a Negotiating Counsel fee of \$15,000.00*

*for his services in negotiating a new three-year DFM Collective Agreement, plus documented expenses not to exceed \$3,000.00; to pay each of the five members of the DSO Negotiating Committee a lump sum of \$300.00 for their services in negotiating a new three-year DSO/DFM Collective Agreement; to pay each of the five members of the DSO Orchestra Committee \$10.00 per meeting, not to exceed 12 meetings per year; to pay documented expenses for the ICSOM Delegate when they attend the ICSOM Conference; to pay documented DSO Committee expenses (local counsel, fees, clerical costs, telephone, supplies, etc.) not to exceed \$13,800.00; to pay the local DSO counsel a retainer of \$700.00; to pay Coopers and Lybrand an amount not to exceed \$3,300.00 for their actuarial services; and pledge an amount not to exceed \$15,000.00 to match a \$15,000.00 contingency fund set up by the DSO Members."*

This commitment amounts to \$19,500.00 per year, plus \$19,500.00 for negotiations and the \$15,000.00 contingency fund pledge. Shortly after this motion passed, some unprecedented circumstances led the DSO to settle six months early and for a one-year contract. This led to further consultation with the union Executive Board. They then agreed to pay the negotiation fee in full, since the contingency fund was not needed at all, and since a work-stoppage would have been much more costly than will be negotiating again next year.

The DSO members are most appreciative of this support from Local 5, especially that of the Executive Board and the Local 5 President, Merle Alvey.

Catherine Compton,  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra

### THE NEW ICSOM DIRECTORY

We hope that the new 1981-1982 ICSOM Directory has reached you and meets with your approval.

We would like to bring to your attention the fact that before being sent to our printer, your orchestra personnel lists were checked for errors and sent back to your orchestra for your personal perusal and correction. The Directory was then type set and again checked for error by our printing firm (at considerable cost).

It is human to err and despite every precaution it is likely that a few mistakes remain, though we would like to think that all 300,000 characters in the booklet are perfect.

Our apology for any discrepancies and hope that you will put the Directory to good use.

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#### EASTERN ORCHESTRAS

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Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, Buffalo Symphony, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, 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

Brad Buckley, St. Louis Symphony  
7320 Chamberlain, University City, Mo. 63130,  
Phone: (314) 863-4916

Alabama Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Florida Symphony, Houston Symphony, Kansas City Philharmonic, New Orleans Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Oklahoma Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Louisville Symphony, San Antonio Symphony.

#### CENTRAL ORCHESTRAS

Bert Siegel, Cleveland Orchestra  
3167 Chelsea Dr. Cleveland Hgts. Ohio 44118. Phone: (216) 371-9190

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, Utah Symphony.

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