

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

VOLUME XX



JULY 1982, NO. 5

A CURE FOR STAGE FRIGHT?

Tom Hall, Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Surely one of the most hateful curses that can plague the performing musician is that dreaded onset of sweaty palms, racing pulse, trembling hands, dry mouth, labored breathing, nausea, and memory loss while under the pressure of playing for a large or critical audience. What soloist, chamber music player or auditioning orchestral musician has not experienced, due to an attack of "nerves," the frustrating inability to realize the maximum technical accuracy or subtle interpretive nuances of which he is capable and which can make the difference between a mediocre and an exceptional performance, between getting a job or failing to do so?

Although one may learn to cope with stage fright with performance experience, its disabling effects often do not lessen with increased skill, exposure and maturity. Performance and anxiety have become inevitably linked over many years of training. Music students become classically conditioned to experience the "fight or flight" response by having to play difficult music, often inadequately prepared and learned with much negative feedback from teachers, before highly critical professors and peers. The performance-under-stress pattern continues into professional life at auditions and concerts.

Performers have long sought to control nervousness, in part by pharmacological means. Taking a tranquilizer or having a drink before playing may have a calming effect but can also result in reduced efficiency, drowsiness, and other adverse side effects. Abuse or overuse can create problems greater than the original ones.

For the person severely hampered by the disabling symptoms of stage fright comes new hope in the form of a group of drugs called beta blockers. These agents prevent adrenalin from combining with specialized beta receptors in the autonomic nervous system and thus eliminate or alleviate the anxiety responses that would ordinarily occur. Widely, effectively and safely used in the treatment of certain cardiac illnesses, beta blockers have recently been studied for their effects on stage fright in tests at the University of Nebraska and the Juilliard School of Music. Results of these and earlier studies are documented in the January, 1982, *American Journal of Medicine* in an article by Drs. Charles Brantigan (a cardiovascular surgeon and, incidentally, a tuba player), Thomas Brantigan (whose doctorate is in music), and Neil Joseph (an ophthalmologist at the University of Nebraska).

The researchers report that doses of propranolol, the best known and most widely studied beta blocking agent, administered ninety minutes before stressful performance situations, dramatically reduced the effects of stage fright without detriment to technical execution. In fact, teachers, performers and critics involved in the study noted significant improvement in accuracy, rhythmic stability and memory among the propranolol users.

Are there risks involved in using beta blockers? These are potent drugs, available by prescription only. Although they have no discernible effects on the central nervous system and intellectual functions, and no serious side effects in normal persons, they could be dangerous, even lethal, if used by asthmatics or persons with unknown or undiagnosed heart disease. Withdrawal after prolonged use could be hazardous. Decisions to use beta blockers should be made on an individual basis, only under medical supervision, and only for isolated situations involving severe stress. As with any drug, indiscriminate use is risky and undesirable.

There is also an ethical issue. Might not the use of potent prescription drugs by a performer at an audition give him an unfair edge over the competition just as it might to the athlete or race horse? Does an audition by a candidate who uses propranolol reveal with greater or lesser accuracy how he will play on the job? Must orchestras be prepared to administer blood and urine tests to audition applicants?

Incidentally, the New York participants in the recent study included professional musicians, some with the N.Y. Philharmonic. The researchers noted that "cardiovascular stress response in the more accomplished musicians in New York was of greater magnitude than that seen in music students at the University of Nebraska." They conjecture that "an inability or unwillingness to tolerate a high degree of stress is a leading reason why capable musicians leave the profession."

ADRIAN GNAM NEW NEA MUSIC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Adrian Gnam has been elevated from his position as Assistant Director of the NEA Music Program to the post of Director by NEA Chairman Frank Hodsoll. Gnam, a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of the University of Cincinnati, is well known in orchestra circles. He is an oboist and has played in both the American Symphony and the Cleveland Orchestra as well as with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. He was recently appointed conductor of the Midland (Michigan) Symphony Orchestra.

CORRECTION

The article entitled 1982 APPROPRIATION TO NEA CUT which appeared in the May issue of Senza Sordino contained several inaccuracies. Only 20 per cent of the Endowment's appropriation is earmarked for the States, not half, as was stated. Also, awards for special projects are no longer an NEA program but rather is responded to by each of the discipline areas when special projects or events come to its attention.

HOUSTON AGREEMENT INCLUDES INNOVATIONS

Bernice Beckerman, Houston Symphony

The Houston Symphony Orchestra musicians have ratified a new three year contract effective May 23rd, 1982.

The Orchestra Committee set the groundwork for these negotiations with the Society by first addressing areas of mutual concern such as audition procedures and orchestra morale. Meetings were held with each section of the orchestra to iron out sectional problems and pinpoint specific areas of concern. These were followed by frank and open discussion with the orchestra's conducting staff as well as the executive director, Gideon Toeplitz. In turn, members of the Committee were invited to join the Planning committee and Musical Affairs committee of the Society, giving us not only complete knowledge of the financial condition of the Society and their musical goals, but the opportunity to offer our viewpoint and expertise. A joint feeling of responsibility for improving the musical quality of the orchestra as well as finding ways to increase the earned income was present during all the negotiations and led to a flexible approach toward financial benefits.

Since salary increases often just push one into a higher tax bracket and diminish the percentage of take-home pay, the Committee asked the management to explore the possibility of establishing a "cafeteria" or optional benefit deduction plan. Many corporations have been offering similar plans since 1978. Federal laws now allow employers to offer choices between cash and benefits and permit tax-deductible items and other fringe-type benefits to be deducted from employee salaries before taxes are computed. The symphony management researched the type of items that could legally be included and agreed to offer the following items; Medical coverage for dependents; additional life insurance, instrument and disability insurance; P.C.S. card for prescriptions and Union dues.

Basically, the H.S.O. plan will be set up in the following way: management will list the annual cost of the various items being offered as optional deductions. By July 31st, each musician will notify the management which of the optional items (if any) he or she wishes to buy. The cost will be pro-rated on a weekly basis (limited to a maximum deduction of \$150) and beginning September 1st that amount will be deducted from the weekly salary. Income taxes will be based on the net amount or reduced salary. Changes in the choice of items may be made once a year. For instance, if the cost of dependent coverage for the medical-dental insurance is \$520 per year and a scale player elects that item, \$10 per week will be deducted from his/her paycheck and the taxable income has been reduced to \$540.

In addition to the tax consideration, the advantage of negotiating a "cafeteria" plan means each person can choose the benefits most important to him or her. In this way, a single person is not subsidizing dependent coverage for those with families, or musicians with less expensive instruments are not in effect paying the cost of increased coverage for those with expensive instruments. By using the cafeteria approach to optional benefits, the core package of salary and benefits for all the musicians was greatly improved. For those using the options available, income taxes will be lower and take-home pay higher.

The P.C.S. card or Pharmaceutical Card System, now available as an optional item, had been part of the medical plan under the previous contract. The card provides prescriptions at a cost of \$1.00 at participating pharmacies. A different company has been chosen to provide medical coverage under the new contract. The P.C.S. card was dropped in order to provide greater benefits in other areas.

The new Disability coverage which takes over after 90 days of sick leave pays 60% (up to \$3,000) of monthly earnings to

age 70 if one is totally disabled. If disability prevents one from working as a musician, but is not total, benefits are for 24 months.

The significant increase in pension benefits was made possible by going to a fixed benefit rather than a benefit based on a percentage of earnings. It enabled the Society to offer a higher pension for all three years of the agreement with retirement at age 60 instead of 65. For anyone electing to work past the age of 60, until 65, \$200 per year will be added to the annual pension amount. Those musicians whose pension credits already entitle them to a larger amount than the new benefit have been "grandfathered" and will receive the larger amount at retirement.

Basically, terms of the new contract are as follows:

Wages: (were at \$510, including \$15. E.M.G.)

1st year	\$550, including \$20. E.M.G.
2nd year	\$585, including \$25. E.M.G. (26 weeks) \$620, including \$25. E.M.G. (26 weeks)
3rd year	\$660, including \$30. E.M.G. (26 weeks) \$700, including \$30. E.M.G. (26 weeks)

A core package of benefits for each musician includes:

Medical and increased Dental Insurance	
Life Insurance	\$30,000 (was \$15,000)
Accidental D. and D.	\$100,000 (was \$15,000)
Tour Insurance	\$100,000 (expanded to include travel to and from work)
Instrument Insurance	\$20,000 (was \$10,000)

"Cafeteria" type deductions mentioned above plus other items permitted by the I.R.S. which may be added in the future. Tax-sheltered annuity contributions will not count as part of the \$150. maximum "cafeteria" deduction.

Seniority pay: \$5. per week for each 5 years of service up to \$25. - 25 years, based on scale.

Pension: Plan changed to fixed benefit. \$12,000 at age 60 with 30 years service. Minimum was \$7800., age 65 with 30 years.

Vacation: 7 weeks first year. 8 weeks last two years as part of E.M.G. In exchange for the eighth week, recording sessions may be scheduled on one of the free days during five working weeks and not count as part of the weekly minimum. (Limit of six sessions per season.) The first 18 hours of recording in each season *are* counted within the weekly total of services.

Maternity Leave: Two weeks prior to birth and up to six weeks following as deemed necessary by physician.

New committees will include a separate Artistic Advisory Committee with expanded areas of input, a Pension Committee to meet with Trustees of the Pension plan, an Educational Committee to help plan student performances, Probation review committees. Each committee, including the Travel committee, will be elected except that one member of the Orchestra Committee will serve on each committee.

The contract was negotiated between the Orchestra Committee composed of Bill Black, Chairman, Marian Wilson, Charles Tabony, David Waters and Bernice Beckerman, and Gideon Toeplitz, the new Executive Director of the Houston Symphony. Negotiations were carried on in a spirit of cooperation and the mutual desire to produce a contract which would provide the musicians with greater financial benefits and improved working conditions while giving the management greater flexibility in scheduling and opportunities for increased productivity.

In light of current economic conditions, even here in Houston, the Committee and management deserve much credit for accomplishing their goal.

TOM COMBINES PAUKEN AND TALKIN'

What kid isn't prone to daydreaming? What boy in his childish pursuit of a hero to emulate hasn't visualized himself hitting baseballs over walls. Such dreams sustain us in our growing years.

In Indianapolis there is a tympanist who has his cake and eats it too. He lives two dreams. Not only has he been able to pursue a professional life as a musician in the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra since 1965 but is able to combine it with participation in a field he has loved all his life, baseball.

Some of us watch baseball; some participate on orchestra teams. Tom Akins does more. He is half of the broadcasting team that services the Indianapolis Indians, a Triple A affiliate of the Cincinnati Reds. He handles the color commentary for seven innings and also relieves Howard Kellman, his partner, to do two innings of play-by-play. This is his eighth year. Tom manages to play this role at Bush Stadium when he is not playing summer orchestra concerts. He views his activity as an ideal set-up; playing for a major league orchestra and broadcasting for a Triple A baseball team and on his schedule.

During the spring of 1981, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra toured Florida for several weeks. Akins visited eleven training camps where he interviewed players and accumulated background information during the day and sat behind his tympani each evening.

How did Tom become involved as a broadcaster? When he joined the Indianapolis Symphony he found that the son of Max Schumacher, the contrabassoonist with the orchestra, was general manager of the Indianapolis Indians. In time the younger Schumacher and Tom Akins collaborated to promote pre-game



Tom Akins, tympanist/broadcaster.

activities which would involve not only the orchestra but the orchestra soft-ball team (the ISO-metrics) as well. Tom is manager and 1st baseman.

The collaboration has been successful. The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra baseball team, arch rivals of the ISO-metrics, have visited Bush Stadium on several occasions. This is not "small potatoes" on a local sandlot. Tom does it right. Several years ago a game was scheduled the week before the Indy "500" and Tom not only got Johnny Rutherford, the famous driver, to play with the ISO-metrics but also managed to have the game broadcast over local radio.

In 1975, when Howard Kellman left Indianapolis station temporarily because the Indians baseball club, his employer, lost half of its broadcasting network, Akins submitted a tape to the station. They liked it and hired him to do broadcasts for the station. The following year, the network was restored, Kellman rehired and Tom was kept on as color commentator.

Considering the number of percussion students that pour out of our music schools each year and how few manage to find positions with our major orchestras and then ponder the possibilities of landing a broadcasting job in a major American city, Tom Akins has beaten the odds twice.

While all goes well with him, we know that he won't rest until he's booked a Cincinnati-Indianapolis orchestra soft-ball game into Riverfront Stadium and has both orchestras playing a pre-game concert. We're betting that he can beat the odds again.

IT COULD ELIMINATE LATE-COMERS

The Manchester Guardian reports that following a symphony concert this analysis was submitted to the conductor by a group of time study experts.

Dear Mr. Conductor:

For considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do. The number should be reduced and the work spread more evenly over the whole of the concert, thus eliminating peaks of activity. All of 12 violins were playing identical notes; this seems unnecessary duplication. The staff of this section should be drastically cut. If a larger volume of sound is required, it could be obtained by electronic apparatus.

Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demisemiquavers; this seems to be unnecessary refinement. It is recommended that all notes should be rounded out to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done it would be possible to use trainees and lower grade operatives more extensively.

No useful purpose is served by repeating on the horns a passage which has already been handled by the strings. It is estimated that if all theme repetitions were eliminated, the whole concert time of two hours could be reduced to 20 minutes and there would be no need for intermission.

Time Study, Ltd.

May 18, 1982

Mr. John Palanchian
ICSOM Treasurer
277 Walton Street
Englewood, New Jersey 07631

Dear Mr. Palanchian:

Enclosed are two checks totalling \$9,819.96 which is the amount that the North Carolina Symphony owes to the ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund.

ICSOM has come through again, helping one of its member orchestras to make it through hard times and we all appreciate the assistance. It also feels good to be paying off that debt.

Things are looking better for the NCS at this point. The fund raising is going better than it had been and our Trustees have just named Gerhard Zimmerman (presently Ass't in St. Louis) to the post of Artistic Director (a choice which the orchestra whole-heartedly endorses). So, it looks like we're going to make it after all and are looking forward to next season.

I hope you have a pleasant summer and I look forward to meeting you at the conference next August.

Very truly yours,

(Ms.) Patricia Banko
ICSOM Rep., NCS

North
Carolina
Symphony



Orchestra
Committee

LOS ANGELES HOSTS 1982 ICSOM CONFERENCE

The 1982 ICSOM Conference will be held in Los Angeles beginning August 9 and lasting through the morning of August 13. The host Los Angeles Philharmonic has arranged for the conference to be held at the famous Biltmore Hotel. The agenda of the Conference is constant in keeping with our by-laws but the substance of the Conference will be as follows:

This will be the twenty-first ICSOM Conference. We have reached our majority so it is appropriate that we celebrate this occasion with a serious re-appraisal of our organization's and our orchestras' needs and whether we need to make serious changes to meet those needs. We are optimistic that out of that process will come growth and change needed. There is no doubt that such examination assumes we will have your best people and that they will come instructed by your orchestra and prepared to instruct us as to your needs.

There is little doubt that this has been an unusually difficult year for many orchestras. Survival is a real issue in more orchestras than ever before. When an orchestra's survival is threatened, musicians' relationships with trustees and managements are too often cast in roles that we are unprepared to fill. There will be, at this conference, general sessions and workshops to prepare us to better cope with these new roles. We hope that a better understanding of those problems will also enable orchestras to deal with them with greater expertise in the event that trouble looms.

This is the year for elections for the positions of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and Senza Sordino Editor.

Guests this year will be Mr. Adrian Gnam, the new Director of the Music Program for the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Ernest Fleischmann and Mr. Henry Fogel, the Chief Executive Officers of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the National Symphony. We are hopeful that a particular famous artist-union leader will address the Conference. That specific announcement will be made by Bulletin. We have in past conferences experi-

enced the expert and energizing observations of our counsel, Mr. I. Philip Sipser. This promises to be one of those vintage years. Mr. Victor Fuentealba, President of the AF of M will be the Federation officer in attendance and we very much look forward to his address.

All in all it should be an exciting time in the land where everyone is golden and slim and nobody perspires. We'll do our best to find time for sun, water and sand but we only promise to try. All this will be at:

The Biltmore Hotel, Aug. 9-13
515 South Olive Street
Los Angeles, California 90013
213-624-1011

Agenda and schedule will be mailed to your delegate and orchestra well ahead of the Conference.

Fred Zenone, ICSOM Chairman

L.A. ORCH. GIVEN VACATION OPTION ABROAD

The Los Angeles Philharmonic returned on June 2nd from a three week tour that took them to Nagoya, Osaka, Fukuoka and Tokyo (9 days) as well as Seoul, Korea. While abroad they taped three television shows under the new Audio-Visual Agreement.

There was about two weeks vacation between the end of the tour and resumption of work in Los Angeles so members who wished were given the option of remaining in Tokyo to spend vacation time or de-planing in Honolulu en route home and were given their return ticket.

Plans for next season include a five week European tour that ends the season. At least three weeks of vacation will occur before the orchestra begins its Hollywood Bowl season. It is hoped that the same option is available for that tour as well.

ICSOM OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

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

VICE CHAIRMAN

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

SECRETARY

Nancy Griffin
Seattle Symphony
Box 20013
Seattle, Wa. 98102
Phone: (206) 329-3118

TREASURER

John Palanchian
New York City Opera
277 Walton St.
Englewood, New Jersey 07631
Phone: (201) 569-4436

EDITOR, SENZA SORDINO

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

ICSOM AREA REPRESENTATIVES

EASTERN ORCHESTRAS

David Angus, Rochester Philharmonic
284 Castlebar Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14610, Phone: (716) 271-1730

Baltimore Symphony, Boston Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, 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
6607 Waterman, St. Louis, 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

Catherine Compton, Detroit Symphony
221 E. Boston Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202, Phone: (313) 869-7367

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.

COUNSEL

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

SENZA SORDINO is the official publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians and is published six times a year on a bi-monthly basis. ICSOM is affiliated as a conference of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO.

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

Subscriptions: A.F.M. Members \$4.00 per year
Non-Members A.F.M. \$7.00 per year

