

Senza Sordino

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A LOOK AT TWO EUROPEAN ORCHESTRAS

By Heidi Waleson

ICSOM maintains an informal liaison with foreign orchestras which express an interest in the national organization of American orchestras and in sharing information and assistance on a colleague-to-colleague basis. To better understand the professional life of our colleagues in orchestras abroad and to be able to compare their institutions with our own, ICSOM commissioned professional writer Heidi Waleson to secure information during a recent trip to Europe. She asked of qualified persons affiliated with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam the questions we put forth; their answers are contained in the article which follows.

What is the hierarchical relationship of the chief conductor or music director, the professional administrator and the musicians? Who makes artistic, personnel, and policy decisions?

The London Philharmonic is a self-governing cooperative orchestra, one of four such orchestras in London. Its governing board is made up entirely of musicians, elected representatives of the orchestra, who hire a professional administrator (called the managing director) to take charge of the orchestra's day-to-day operations, find work, and secure funding. Each player has a share and therefore a vote. The managing director also sits on the board. Almost all of the orchestra's past managing directors have been former chairmen or players, but newly appointed John Willan has experience as a chartered accountant and as manager of classical productions for EMI Music. The orchestra has a budget of about 3 million pounds sterling and a staff of 15, including van drivers and librarian.

Klaus Tennstedt, the LPO's chief conductor, does about twelve concerts a year with the orchestra at Royal Festival Hall as well as some recording and touring. His influence on overall planning of the orchestra's year is described as limited: principal conductors in London orchestras usually have large international careers and/or major appointments elsewhere and are therefore not interested in devoting much attention to what the orchestra does outside their own repertoire. Part of these conductors' value to the orchestras is their connections with particular recording companies. Planning responsibility is taken by the board of directors working together with the managing director. Policy, as in the selection of guest conductors and repertoire, may originate with players and be funneled through the board to the managing director, or it may develop the other way round. The board's role is to stay in touch with the players, which can be a delicate task. For example, when policy being formulated is not ready to be discussed with the orchestra members, the board must keep the sort of contact that keeps the orchestra from feeling left out. When the system is working well, board members can "take a back seat and get on with their playing."

Personnel decisions are made by the players. The board members attend auditions as do principals from the sections

concerned; for example, all the string principals would come to a violinist audition. The board has the right to say yes or no to hiring a player, but would probably not engage a player who did not please the section leaders. Players do not receive their shares until they have been in the orchestra for a year, though they are invited to all the meetings, in effect to give them a chance to see how the system works before they vote.

The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam is the Rolls Royce of the Dutch orchestras and until quite recently has been treated as such. All Dutch orchestras are essentially government entities, subsidized by both the federal and local governments, and their salary structure is tied to that of the civil service. The orchestra is governed by an outside board of directors whose current chairman is the former mayor of Amsterdam. There is a professional administrator, who is currently both general manager and artistic director, hired by the board of trustees. The orchestra has a budget of 18 million guilders and an office staff of about 10 people.

Artistic decisions are made through the artistic committee, which consists of the artistic director, chief conductor, five player members of the orchestra, and a member of the board of trustees. Generally the artistic director (a musicologist) plans the season and tries to convince the committee to accept it, but he also accepts a great deal of input about repertoire and about what conductors and soloists should be invited. If there is a stalemate, the artistic director makes the decision. The principal conductor is consulted, particularly about his own repertoire and that of others if there should be a conflict.

Personnel decisions are made by an audition committee of players. The chief conductor and the artistic director sit on the committee but have only one vote each, as has every other committee member. A player is taken on for a one-year trial period and usually accepted; in fact, the player is sometimes given his contract before the trial year is up. The orchestra also has a large say in the selection of the principal conductor: polling the musicians is an essential step in that process.

What is the workload?

The London orchestras are fee-earning, which means they are paid per service rather than a salary, and sick pay and benefits are minimal. Part of the rationale for the self-employed status is the advantageous tax position it gives the players. Musicians must work as many dates as possible in order to earn enough money. These may be classical concerts and rehearsals, or commercial work like film scores, recordings or advertising jingles. Classical concerts presented in Royal Festival Hall by London Philharmonic Orchestra Ltd. lose money, so they must be balanced by considerable outside work, either hired-out classical concerts or commercial sessions, which bring in management fees. This may entail working several services

(Continued on Page 2)

EUROPEAN ORCHESTRAS (Continued from Page 1)

a day for five or six weeks without a day off. There is a lot of competition for the available commercial work. Two of the other London orchestras have given 630 as the number of services they may work in a year. The LPO, however, closes down for a month, as does the Philharmonia; the players in the other two rotate time off. The LPO is the orchestra for the Glyndebourne opera festival for three months during the summer, which gives it a chance to play opera but entails considerable travel time: Glyndebourne is fifty miles from central London. The orchestra must also insure that adequate work is available for *all* the players: if they're recording Mozart symphonies, for example, they need to have complementary work that includes harp, *cor anglais*, and other instruments.

At the Concertgebouw, there cannot be more than nine services a week, but it often works out to eight. Rehearsal services are three hours long with a break of about 25 minutes in the middle. The conductor may extend a general rehearsal by half an hour with the permission of the orchestra, but the players are not paid extra: they are essentially civil servants. The number of concerts played each week varies; there are several different subscription series, but not all have a concert every week. A typical subscription week might be Sunday contemporary music concert; Monday morning and evening rehearsal (Monday evening is sometimes canceled); Tuesday morning rehearsal; Wednesday morning rehearsal, evening concert; Thursday evening concert; Friday free; Saturday out-of-town concert. Evening and back-to-back rehearsals are unusual. Orchestra members know the concert schedule a year in advance.

What effect does the fee-earning status of the London Philharmonic have on the workplace?

The workload is physically exhausting because of having to measure up to the differing requirements of many top-class conductors and because of the amount of work the orchestra does. Players may drop out of the system. Unless players have a remarkably strong constitution, "the freelance system tends to take their best years, and then they're replaced by other people because of the nature of the job and the nature of the insecurity." Although the work is usually there, the uncertainty often leads players in the London orchestras to take every outside job they can get, thus hastening burnout. The schedule leaves little room for family life or other kinds of musical life such as teaching or playing chamber music. On the other hand, the constant working together can also have a positive effect on morale "because everybody believes he can just go on forever."

How would you characterize job satisfaction? What are the deepest satisfactions and frustrations?

The LPO players are proud of their orchestra and of their role in running it, of "working at the highest level with the best people on all aspects of music." The players maintain that there is good commercial music too, and they are proud of the fact that they play it well. Some London players say they welcome the variety. "The deepest satisfaction is that [in spite of the workload and problems with subsidy] we still exist." The deepest frustration is complementary: the lack of subsidy causes the punishing workload and lack of security, and because the government sees that the orchestras can survive with so little it will give no more. Federal and local subsidy came to about 15% of the budget before the Arts Council's portion was cut by 28% last December. The tax structure in Britain does not encourage private giving, and corporate subsidy is a relatively new phenomenon there. Another frustration is also rooted in the lack of subsidy: the LPO cannot afford to be too adventurous in its programming, and so it can end up playing the same standard

repertory over and over again, with a corresponding loss of freshness.

In the Concertgebouw, pride in the orchestra is also a large factor in job satisfaction. "The orchestra has an extremely broad repertoire. It can become a French orchestra, a German orchestra, a 20th century orchestra. There is also a lot less jealousy here than in other orchestras." The principal frustration is financial: the orchestra is one of the top ensembles in Europe, yet the players are not paid on a par with, for example, the Berlin Philharmonic.

How would you say your society sees you?

The funding segment of British society is suspicious of the self-governed London orchestras. The much publicized inner strife of some of them leaves all "tarred with the same brush" and thus perhaps dubious candidates for subsidy. On the artistic side, continental orchestras, because they are foreign, are often perceived by the public as better, which is a source of frustration to London players, who think they do extremely well under very difficult circumstances. Players also feel that inadequate music education and the prevalence of canned music is reducing the size of the concert-going public.

The Concertgebouw, a Dutch institution like the Rijksmuseum, is in a somewhat better position in that it is revered by the music-loving population. Concertgebouw players are recognized from television or concerts and may get quite a bit of attention. The orchestra regularly makes the front pages of the newspapers and is the standard to which other orchestras are compared. On the other hand, there is some of the population which frowns upon excess in any direction be it good or bad, making the striving for superlative standards an uphill struggle at times. This segment of society finds the orchestra elitist and ticket prices and overall costs too expensive; it would happily accept a performance which is just "good enough" rather than truly excellent if it meant keeping prices down. Until several years ago the orchestra was subsidized in full by the government, with ticket sales bringing in only a small fraction of the operating budget. In recent years austerity programs have led to cutbacks, including an attempt to reduce the number of salaried players by 23, an attempt foiled by a combination of an international campaign in the press and astute political maneuvering by the management.

What provisions are made for voicing player opinion and for formal and informal collective bargaining?

At the LPO, the players voice opinion through their elected representatives, who are the board of directors.

In the Concertgebouw, there is an orchestra committee, comparable to that of an American orchestra, which represents the players in negotiation with the managing director or conductor. Salary is not discussed, due to the civil service status, but working conditions are. There are few gripes these days, however, apart from salary. Twenty years ago, the committee forced the resignation of an artistic director and made great strides in negotiating touring conditions and player responsibility during recording sessions. Now, such conditions are considered excellent. Representatives of the orchestra can also negotiate with Ministry of Culture civil servants in the Hague, but strikes are unheard of. Good relations between the orchestra and the ministry must be preserved as much as possible.

Heidi Waleson is a free-lance writer based in New York City. Her articles on cultural institutions and the arts have appeared in The New York Times, Symphony Magazine, and Opera News.

OKLAHOMA, MINNESOTA MUSICIANS PLAY FOR FAMINE RELIEF

A SYMPHONY OF CONCERN was more than a concert. It was an expression of the deep emotions which Oklahoma Symphony musicians felt for people we had never met, thousands of miles away, starving in Africa, people with whom we have nothing in common except our humanity.

We wanted to help, to give. We were not alone. Finding others who shared these feelings was easy: the American Red Cross, an organization which exists solely for these reasons, already helping this cause, and through which we could channel our efforts; Joseph Silverstein, who gave of his time and talent in return for only his expenses; Martina Arroyo, who reduced her fee so that we could afford to include her in our efforts; the anonymous donor who paid her fee; the Skirvin Hotel, which donated suites for the guest artists; the Symphony management, which donated its help in marketing and operations; the stage personnel, who donated their time and efforts; the media, which supported us before, during, and after the event; Randy Klein, our principal clarinetist, who started the project and did a lion's share of the work; the Oklahoma Symphony musicians, contract and noncontract personnel, who spent their day off rehearsing and performing; and the community, who heard and gave and felt and shared.

We are disappointed that we did not reach the financial goal we had hoped to achieve, but the real success is in the effort, not an amount. Through our music we tried to help a cause which concerns all of us, not as musicians but as people. The notes were played long ago, but the music is still being heard.

*Mark Mordue
Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra
ICSOM Representative*

On Monday, March 11, at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, 110 members of the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra presented SAVE THE CHILDREN—SYMPHONY FOR AFRICA. This major benefit concert was conducted by Leonard Slatkin, and the soloist in Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4* was pianist Eugene Istomin. The program opened with a performance of the *Toy Symphony* of Leopold Mozart with soloists from the Twin Cities' two youth orchestras. A chamber ensemble from the Minnesota Orchestra played a new work, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, by Minnesota composer Janika Vandervelde, and the combined orchestras presented *Pinocchio* by Toch and the *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* by Benjamin Britten with guest narrator Alejandro Rey.

All of the performers donated their services, as did stagehands, ushers, and many members of the community who, by giving generously of their time and services, helped to keep costs of presentation to a minimum. For this overriding human cause the executive committee of the Minnesota Orchestra waived the fee for rental of the hall. Donations were generously given. A very successful logo was created especially for this concert.

Such benefit concerts require many hours of work by the organizers. Not only did the effort raise close to \$50,000 to send to our suffering fellow human beings in Africa, but the community made a real statement of caring and concern and affirmed the role that artists can play in human issues.

Groups wishing help or materials in planning such a concert can contact Adele Lorraine, c/o Minnesota Orchestra, 1111 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

*Adele Lorraine
Minnesota Orchestra*

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON STAGE FRIGHT

Supplementing our articles about the use of beta-blocking drugs to alleviate symptoms of performance anxiety, Dr. Henry Scott, a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra bass section and a Doctor of Psychoanalysis, writes:

The profession of music is unique in that it is glorified in a way as to attract many individuals searching to fulfill unrealistic dreams and desires. Such illusionment can lead to unhappy and confused lives, broken homes, addictions and problems related to public performance.

I suggest that performing in public is not necessarily the problem in itself but is rather an outward manifestation of underlying complications. There is little wonder why many are distraught with severe nervousness, sweaty hands or dry mouth, shaking bow arms, memory blocks and other detrimental occurrences which impair performance. The real difficulties are deep-rooted and are manifest in one's early development: negative attitudes created, experiences encountered, and relationships (especially parental) experienced. These collective factors specifically influence one's life style and generally influence his relationship and commitment to the public world around him.

How does one discover, understand and work through these related psychiatric commitments as a means of reaching such unconscious conflicts? This writer advocates psychoanalysis or related psychiatric commitments as means of reaching such unconscious phenomena. Psychoanalysis, although costly and usually spanning two to five years, can provide a permanent solution to working through and resolving such problems. It may well serve as the best means of ameliorating the anxieties which many sensitive musicians experience.

The view that people who seek professional help are "not well" has changed. Those who live in a constant unhappy state and do nothing to improve their condition are misinformed. Discovering one's true self is a joy everyone should experience. It not only enhances one's ability to perform and enjoy the intrinsic qualities of music for more than a means of a livelihood, but reaches and enriches the complete fabric of one's being. This frees unconscious reservoirs of artistic integrity and unshrouds genuine artistic expression.

1985 MUSIC MEDICINE SYMPOSIA

Phillip R. Gard, administrator of the Center for Continuing Medical Education at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, has asked us to announce the third annual symposium on medical problems of musicians to be held in Aspen, CO, July 25-28. A meeting held at the Chautauqua (NY) Institute on July 9 will deal with medical problems of performing artists, including musicians and dancers.

Persons desiring additional information on either symposium may contact the Center for CME, Cleveland Clinic Educational Foundation, 9500 Euclid Avenue, Room TT3-101, Cleveland, OH 44106, or may call 800-762-8173 (-8172 in Ohio).

The First International Conference on "Mind, Body, and the Performing Arts: Stress Processes in the Psychology and Physiology of Music, Dance, and Drama" is scheduled for July 15-19, 1985, at New York University. The conference will focus on stresses from the early cognitive, emotional, and artistic development of the child to the physical and psychological aspects of the professional arts performer. Further information is available from John J. Kella, 777 Education Building, Washington Square, New York, NY 10003.

SETTLEMENT SUMMARIES

Settlements are reported in greater detail in the ICSOM bulletins which are sent immediately to member orchestras; basic summaries and interesting new provisions are noted in Senza Sordino. Orchestras are encouraged to file bulletins as a basic source of information.

Musicians of the **Kennedy Center Orchestra** agreed in January to extend their previous contract through August 25, 1985, due to the Kennedy Center's present financial difficulties.

Louisville Orchestra musicians agreed to a new 5-year contract in December, 1984, ending a 10-week strike. Wages (were \$326) increase to \$353.03-\$372.64-\$421.68-\$456.00-\$490.32. The contract provides for re-negotiation of wages in the 2nd and 4th years. Length of season (was 40) will be 38 weeks in the first two years, 39 weeks the next two years, and 40 weeks in the final year. New provisions for maternity leave (4 weeks, not counted against sick leave) and instrument insurance (management pays full coverage for instruments used in the orchestra). An affiliate group, Friends of the Orchestra, has been organized to provide a broader base for fund-raising and promotion.

Louisville musicians extend thanks to ICSOM orchestra support and encouragement during the strike. AFM Strike Fund payments were an important financial aid.

Musicians of the **Rochester Philharmonic** voted March 9 to approve a new 4-year contract, retroactive to 1983-84. Wages paid that season were \$485 plus \$15 EMG. Increases are to \$505.50 plus \$17 EMG, \$528 plus \$18 EMG, and \$581 plus \$19 EMG. Season length increases from a current 48 weeks to 49 weeks in the third year and 52 weeks in 1986-87. A lump-sum seniority payment of \$25 for each year of service since 1964-65, not to exceed the musician's salary, will be paid once a year; the increment increases to \$30 in 1986-87. Life insurance remains at \$25,000 but increases to \$30,000 and \$35,000 in the final two years. A \$6,750 pension is paid to all retirees. Vacation increases from 5 to 7 weeks in the last year.

Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra members ratified a new 3-year agreement on January 13, the day before their strike deadline. SPCO musicians had been playing and talking since September 1984. Wages remain at \$30,250 in the first year and increase to \$32,065 and \$34,309.55 in the second and third years. Length of season stays at 40 weeks but is now divided into two periods of 36 and 4 weeks. Vacation stays at 4 weeks. Complete medical and dental coverage is provided for musicians and dependents, including management payment of \$100 deductible for medical. \$50,000 life insurance coverage is new.

The review committee, a special concern, was retained, as was a board-musician liaison committee which addresses matters not resolved between orchestra and management. Musicians now have input, through an established committee, on changes in orchestra size.

Musicians made a number of concessions in scheduling to allow management greater flexibility in this area, including increases in concert length (from 125 to 130 minutes), tour days (from 70 to 75), 9-service weeks (from 4 to 8), and Sunday afternoon services (from 0 to 6), and reductions in overtime increment (from 15 minutes to 5) and in number of weeks with 2 consecutive free days.

As of press time, the **San Antonio Symphony Orchestra** had just ratified a new contract, ending a strike begun January 5, the first in the orchestra's 45-year history. Details will be summarized in the next issue.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC

The following is excerpted from an article by Sylvia Craft, former executive director of the Association for Classical Music, which appeared in the Fall, 1984, issue of MadAminA! © Copyright 1984 by Music Associates of America and reprinted by kind permission.

The classical music audience in the United States comprises between three and six percent of the population. Some three years ago, a group of music industry professionals decided to join forces in an effort to broaden this audience base and to heighten public awareness of the pleasures of classical music. The result is the Association for Classical Music, a nationwide not-for-profit corporation with membership comprising every aspect of the classical music field, including students and the general public. It is modeled after the Country Music Association, a 25-year-old group that has brought a regional sound, regarded as insular, into national prominence by rallying support from its practitioners.

Under the New York-based organization's aegis, programs and events are being generated to make people more aware of the everyday influence of classical music in their lives. As a public advocacy group, the AfCM encourages more listening (on radio, records and tapes, and in live performance), music literacy and home performance, and public recognition for the composers and performers heard on soundtracks for movies and commercials.

Of particular interest is the music education of children in this country, especially in the primary grades where there is not even a federal guideline or recommendation for music studies. Recently completed is the AfCM's national survey of sixth and tenth-grade student's attitudes toward classical music. [As reported in the New York Times of 4 December 1984, the AfCM survey revealed widespread lack of knowledge and appreciation of classical music among the almost 900 students who participated.]

AfCM members are also at work on establishment of a national classical music week to be highlighted by a television show; creation of an awards plan to honor those whose achievements reflect and further the organization's goals; structuring a program to provide materials on music appreciation and literacy for primary grades in public school systems proving need and assuring use; initiating use of existing feature film segments, in which classical music is used and credited, on cable music channels; and compilation of statistics to more accurately determine the size and demographics of the classical music audience.

Spring 1984 saw the second annual radio broadcast of the AfCM, a two-hour special featuring interviews and samples of recordings that won the 1984 Grammy Awards. Distributed on over 120 stations nationwide by the Mutual Broadcasting System and sponsored by Merrill Lynch, the show was co-hosted by Beverly Sills and AfCM Chairman Martin Bookspan and produced by WNCN-FM (NY).

The AfCM accepts members in 14 categories, all equally represented on the Board of Directors. In addition to individual memberships, there are over 40 companies and institutions included in the corporate membership category. Further information may be obtained by writing to the Association for Classical Music, 24 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019, or by calling (212) 315-1248.

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