

Senza Sordino

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ICSOM CONVENES IN SAN FRANCISCO

THE 1985 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Delegates from orchestras across the country gathered at the Golden Gateway Holiday Inn in San Francisco from August 14 through 18 for ICSOM's annual conference. All but 2 of ICSOM's 48 member orchestras were represented. There was no delegation from Buffalo or Toledo. The Pittsburgh Symphony, on tour in Europe, was represented by the Cleveland delegate.

Work Dues Still an Issue

American Federation of Musicians President Fuentealba, present for the entire conference, addressed delegates at the opening session. Of special interest were President Fuentealba's remarks about union representation and musician relations with the AFM and local unions. President Fuentealba acknowledged that symphony musicians were paying an inordinately large and disproportionate amount of work dues. He promised to vigorously pursue the establishment of some sort of cap on work dues.

President Fuentealba also announced plans to convene local union presidents and local orchestra representatives to discuss the services that unions offer to orchestras. In addition, he will emphasize to local union officers the necessity of providing services to symphony musicians, that part of the union's constituency that is putting the most into the local coffers.

Officers' Reports

In their addresses to delegates, ICSOM chairman Frederick Zenone and president Melanie Burrell noted that the new organization put into effect this past season has proven very successful, especially the working of the President's Council. The division of responsibility, Fred dealing with agencies outside ICSOM and Melanie working on internal communications and programs, has worked very well. Fred noted that communication problems persist among orchestras which are well off in salaries and working conditions; there is also a reluctance among some of these orchestras to participate in unionism on the national level.

In response to President Fuentealba's speech, Fred agreed that local unions should be monitored and should be expected to provide services and money to orchestras, especially because they are the largest and even sole support of some unions. Local unions need greater awareness of the orchestra membership needs. Fred expressed approval of a national AFM convocation of local union presidents and orchestra musician representatives.

A Look at Committee Representation

The 1985 ICSOM conference focused not only on the interaction of orchestras and their unions but also on how musicians are served by orchestra committees. Special concerns were the quality of representation and the effective interaction of constituents and representatives.

In line with this focus, an entire afternoon was given over to a panel discussion of committee activity, led by Liza Hirsch DuBrul. Participants on the panel, most of them committee chairs, were Evangeline Benedetti (New York Philharmonic), Ralph Curry (Cleveland Orchestra), Donald Koss (Chicago Symphony), Ellen McGlone (San Antonio Symphony), Florence Nelson (New York City Opera), Michael Nutt (Los Angeles Philharmonic), Gary Smith (Saint Louis Symphony), and Jay Wadenpfehl (Boston Symphony).

Among the topics examined were the representation and leadership functions of the committee; the interaction of an orchestra's committees; resolution of conflicts and development of consensus within the committee; qualities of good committee members and chairpersons; committee interaction with management, the local union, and the orchestra; perception of committee members by their orchestras (Some committee members among the delegates expressed their frustration at often being given little trust, respect, and support by their orchestras, even being regarded as the enemy once they had been elected); and finding a balance between maintaining continuity and developing new committee members.

Special Reports

Cathy Compton (Detroit Symphony) reported on the activities of the committee on music medicine. Much of this year has been given over to the preparation of a questionnaire to survey musicians' medical problems. The questionnaire has been considerably restructured during the year as its purpose and scope have altered from being an informal in-house survey of all ICSOM orchestras to a sophisticated random sampling which will have credibility with the medical profession. The music medicine committee deserves much gratitude for its valuable work in bringing the survey to this stage of development, where advanced work will be done by the governing board and medical experts.

Karla Holland-Moritz (San Diego Symphony) reported for the sound levels committee. A preliminary report appeared in the June issue of *Senza Sordino*. Additional tabulation confirms earlier findings. The excellent work of this committee in surveying musicians' perceptions of the sound levels problem has also provided the basis for a professional survey. Special concern was voiced during this report about the potentially damaging effects on hearing when one takes aspirin and ototoxic drugs; we hope to have a report on this in a future issue of *Senza Sordino*.

Ralph Curry reported on his activity surveying air line carriers regarding their policies on the transportation of musical instruments. Ralph was also in touch with the Federal Aviation Agency and the Flight Attendants Union; the FAU has peti-

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tioned the FAA for greater restrictions on carry-on baggage.

Fred Zenone reported for the Media Committee. Two problems which arose this year in connection with negotiations of national contracts became items for floor discussion. An understanding was reached that orchestras desiring consideration of their special interests should express their views to the Media Committee, which then uses that and other input to represent the entire field of orchestras to the AFM negotiators; independent back-dooring of the ICSOM committee is to be avoided. Concern was also expressed about orchestras seeking to work for conditions at variance with the requirements of a national contract. Such activity jeopardizes the abilities of other orchestras to work successfully under the terms of that contract; orchestras should view their actions with a national perspective.

Abe Torchinsky, administrator of the ICSOM Emeritus program, has received over 160 names of retired members who have expressed interest in receiving complimentary copies of *Senza Sordino* and the *ICSOM Directory*. Delegates were urged to inform new retirees of this program.

Reporting for the AFM Strike Fund trustees, Henry Shaw (Cincinnati Symphony) clarified new policies. Orchestras must pay for their total complement of players. Dues must be paid by, and benefits paid to, the occupant of the chair, whether or not the player is a regular member or temporary replacement. New members filling newly created positions must pay one year retroactive payment. A fuller explanation is in the *ICSOM Delegate Manual*.

Donald Whyte (New York Philharmonic) reported that, with ICSOM help, the Congress of Strings, held this year at Southern Methodist University under the direction of Joseph Silverstein, has shown considerable growth, including an NEA grant and a 25 percent increase in attendance. ICSOM now sponsors three COS Scholarships, one in its own name, one in the name of former chairman George Zazofsky, and one in the name of former chairman Ralph Mendelson. Upon the recommendation of ICSOM administrator Irving Segall, this last scholarship supersedes the memorial prize instituted in Mendelson's name. The COS now has non-profit status, and local unions, orchestra managements, and individuals are encouraged to consider donating scholarships or unrestricted gifts to this worthy project.

In response to a growing awareness of the need for computerized services, a committee was established this year to explore working with the AFM on computerizing wage chart information; working with Lew Waldeck and Len Leibowitz will be Ellen McGlone and Don Koss. Examining systems for computerizing ICSOM communications and publications will be Paul Ganson (Detroit Symphony), Robert Walp (Houston Symphony), and Tom Hall, *Senza Sordino* editor.

Reports were made by the 14 ICSOM orchestras negotiating for the 1985 season. Some orchestras expected negotiations to go to contract expiration and beyond. Reports will appear in ICSOM bulletins as soon as settlements are reached; summaries of all settlements and detailed reports of the more significant negotiations and provisions gained will appear in *Senza Sordino*.

Special Presentations

Two ICSOM orchestras have had especially difficult problems this year and were given floor time to relate their situations to delegates. Seattle Symphony musicians have experienced considerable contention with their local over work dues and the services to be provided by the union. There was a threat of de-authorization. AFM personnel became involved. The current

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MINNESOTA MUSICIANS, UNION AGREE ON REPRESENTATIONAL COSTS

The Minnesota Orchestra Members Committee has reached a settlement with AFM Local 30-73 regarding representational costs.

In February of 1985 the committee requested that the union pay all lawyer's fees for 1985 negotiations (\$21,643), 1985 Strike Fund dues (\$75 per player), and ICSOM dues (\$25 per player). The total amount requested was \$31,243. [Minnesota musicians currently pay 2.5% work dues.]

In July the committee met with the officers of the local to reach an agreement. The officers expressed their sympathy but claimed that a \$36,000 deficit for fiscal year 1984 prevented their compliance with our request. After much discussion, a compromise was reached.

The officers have personally recommended and endorsed the board's payment of all costs for present and future negotiations (\$21,600 for 1985 compared to \$5,600 in 1982), future arbitrations, current and future delegate expenses to the ICSOM conference, and orchestra members' individual Strike Fund and ICSOM dues after the 1985 season.

We realize that this is a statement of intent and not a binding agreement. The committee will continue to pursue this matter vigorously in the hope that these items can be incorporated into the local union bylaws.

The committee expresses its appreciation to Minnesota Orchestra musician Jim Clute for his efforts in this matter.

Paul Murphy
Minnesota Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

NOTE NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Effective with this volume, a uniform rate of \$6.00 per year supersedes the former rates of \$4.00 and \$7.00 based on AFM membership.

SPCO PROJECT PROMOTES OVERVIEW

On July 9th and 10th, 1985, a group of 19 representatives of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra musicians, staff, and board met for a two-day retreat. One of the members of this group acted as facilitator, a position he holds with a private company. The objective of the meeting was to air concerns about the orchestra and its future direction. These concerns included communication between musicians, staff, and board members; morale of musicians and staff; and financial obligations of the board. As discussions progressed, it became apparent that a more basic problem was a lack of unity among the three groups as to what the mission of the SPCO should be. It was decided that a smaller group should meet to develop and recommend a new mission statement for approval by the planning committee, executive committee, board, and musicians.

Orchestra members at the retreat feel hopeful about this progress. It is a positive step following last seasons' extremely difficult negotiations and down-to-the-wire contract ratification.

Carole Mason Smith
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
ICSOM Delegate

SEATTLE MUSICIANS ACHIEVE WORK DUES REDUCTION, DEFINITION OF UNION BENEFITS

Beginning September 1, 1985, Seattle Symphony musicians' work dues will be reduced from 4% to 3%; on the same date in 1986, work dues will be further reduced to 2.5%. Local 76 will disburse \$7,500 to the orchestra committee in each negotiation year to cover its negotiation expenses. The local will assume all legal fees for negotiations and grievances to a limit of \$100 per hour. The players can select their own legal counsel; the local will continue to have representation on the negotiation committee. The local will pay players' ICSOM dues and AFM Strike Fund dues each year.

The above agreement, reducing work dues from an oppressive level and defining services the local would provide, was reached in May of this year. This action was achieved with considerable difficulty and anguish which cannot be conveyed in a written summary.

The differences we Seattle musicians have had with our union are not the result of anti-union sentiment. We have a spirit of unionism and are well aware of the benefits of a union. But there is a difference between what we feel the union should be and what it actually is. Our problem is that the majority of our union members have interests different from those of full-time musicians.

One of the criticisms we have received from AFM leadership is that we have not taken an active role in the operation of our local. Currently there is no one in our orchestra on the board of our local to represent our interests there; we hope to change this in the next election. There is no sure method of accomplishing this; orchestra musicians make up only 6% of the total membership of the local.

Additionally, there is great resentment directed toward symphony members by the non-working members of the local. We have health benefits which they don't have. We have full-time jobs playing music; they don't. They perceive symphony members as constantly complaining and asking the union to secure more benefits when they have few of the benefits we have.

They forget that we pay the union bills. Our work dues make up 70% of the revenues collected by our local. The costs to our union for contract negotiation and other expenses, including payment of our ICSOM dues and strike fund dues, are far less than the amount of money we pay to the union.

In Seattle we set out to make some changes in our local, and we ran up against a brick wall. The board had no incentive to meet our demands; it was simpler for them to do nothing. We attempted bylaw changes. We tried to lower the work dues. We enlisted the aid of AFM president Fuentealba and Symphony Department administrator Lew Waldeck. What finally got results was our threat to remove the union security clause from our master agreement, an act called deauthorization. (This is different from decertification, which actually removes the union as the bargaining agent.) Additionally, one of our members formed an organization, the International Guild of Symphony, Opera and Ballet Musicians (IGSOBM), to examine alternatives to the present union structure.

It is difficult to say what would have happened had we carried out our threat to deauthorize our union. We were forced to consider this action because our backs were to the wall, we were getting nowhere, and something had to be done.

Problems still exist, not only in Seattle but between other orchestras and their locals. We feel that ICSOM and the AFM should address these problems and make the union what it should be: the representative of the working musician.

Stephen Fissel
Seattle Symphony Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

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 **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** ratified a new 3-year contract on September 17, a week ahead of deadline. Minimum wage (was \$830) increases to \$880-\$930-\$1,000. All ancillary payments increase by similar percentage. Experience increment increases \$5 at every level in the third year to \$15 per week for those with 5 years of service, \$20/10, \$25/15, \$30/20, and \$35/25. Pension remains at previous \$16,500 until third-year increase to \$22,500; all musicians entitled to pensions in the first and second years will receive the increase in the third year. Domestic per diem rate (was \$44) increases to \$48-\$48-\$52 with additional large cities bonuses. New foreign tour rates will equal State Department rates plus 35% (minimum payment of \$35).

Life insurance (was \$65,000) increases to \$75,000. Improvements were achieved in medical coverage, including coverage for musicians retiring between 55-65. Management will provide new \$200 vision and hearing diagnostic allowance and will provide up to \$200 per year allowance for musicians who regularly participate in a health program. Insurance coverage for 1 instrument (and 1 bow for strings), used in the orchestra, will be paid by management.

An additional split-orchestra vacation week at salary is added to previous 7 weeks at scale. Every orchestra member is guaranteed two additional personal release weeks at salary. Beginning in 1986-1987, Milwaukee concerts will be reduced from 10 to 5 to increase number of Sunday-Mondays off. New provision made for 13 weeks pregnancy leave (6 before and 7 after delivery.)

Beginning in 1986-1987, educational concerts are to be concentrated in 2 weeks of 3 rehearsals and 5 concerts over 5 days with Saturdays and Sundays free (or with extra-service pay for Saturday services).

Musicians of the **Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra** approved a new 1-year contract September 10 just 2 hours before their season was scheduled to begin. Wages remain at \$380 plus \$40 EMG, and season length remains at 32 weeks. New in the contract are provisions for *ex officio* musician representation on board committees and for the establishment of a musician-board-music director committee to explore restructuring the orchestra. Discussed will be the board's proposal to reduce the OSO to a 38-piece chamber orchestra and to split this group into smaller ensembles.

Oregon Symphony Orchestra musicians ratified a new 3-year contract August 30, ending a 4-day lockout. Wages (were \$511.90 per week, \$630.95 for principals) increase to \$529.83/\$653.03 - \$551.03/\$679.14 - \$574.15/\$707.65 (or \$24,688.-65/\$30,429 per year in the third year). \$300 per person EMG is new. In the third year season length increases from the present 42 weeks to 43 weeks and guaranteed services increase from 240 to 245. Vacation (2.5 weeks) and leave provisions remain essentially unchanged. Full family medical coverage will be added in the third year. Disability insurance was gained for the first time. Various concessions were made in scheduling. A federal mediator participated in the negotiations.

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resolution is reported elsewhere in this issue. The New York City Ballet has had its differences with Local 802 in a very complex and emotionally charged situation involving the place of extra musicians in the bargaining unit and involving local union non-approval of a contract ratified by the musicians.

Lew Waldeck and Lynn Johnson of the AFM Symphony Department attended the conference. Lew told of plans to provide a computer bulletin board service early next year which will provide ICSOM and ROPA wage chart information, NEA data on grants and orchestra annual budgets, and possibly an electronic mail service.

Len Leibowitz, ICSOM legal counsel, once again presented his negotiation workshop and also addressed the conference on job security and the problems of non-renewals and dismissals.

Physicians affiliated with major clinics for music medicine participated in a panel discussion on the health and medical problems of musicians. Among the most significant assertions put forth by some of the participants was that overuse injury, a major medical problem for musicians, is an independent condition often incorrectly diagnosed as tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, ulnar nerve syndrome, or thoracic duct outlet syndrome. These traditional diagnoses sometimes lead to unnecessary and unproductive surgery. Musicians should be cautious about such diagnosis and about undergoing any surgery.

Other Action

All members of the President's Council were in attendance. This advisory panel was established at last year's conference and has worked very well this year, according to ICSOM president Melanie Burrell. The Council met with the president during the conference to review and discuss issues raised this year. Council members are Ralph Curry, Paul Ganson, Don Koss, Ellen McGlone, and Rip Prétat (Milwaukee Symphony). Florence Nelson (New York City Opera) has agreed to be a sixth member of the President's Council.

Following the recommendation of the ICSOM governing

board, delegates retained the firm of Leibowitz and DuBrul as legal counsel for the coming year. Very much missed at conference this year was Phil Sipser, whose affiliation with ICSOM extends back to 1968. A great depth of affection for Phil and great appreciation for his wise counsel was expressed by all the officers and delegates.

Other guests at this year's conference included two presidents of local unions, Dick Renna from Saint Louis and Robert D'Arcy from Washington, D.C. John Palanchian, vice-president of New York's Local 802 and former ICSOM treasurer, was present. ROPA secretary Elizabeth Pistolesi (Charlotte Symphony) and treasurer Leonard Byrne (Spokane Symphony) attended, as did OCSM president John Trembath.

New members at large for the governing board were elected for two-year terms. Michael Nutt (Los Angeles Philharmonic) and Donald Whyte (New York Philharmonic) were re-elected. New members are Ellen McGlone (San Antonio Symphony) and Gary Smith (Saint Louis Symphony). Thanks to Bernice Beckerman (Houston Symphony) and Cathy Compton (Detroit Symphony) for their years of dedicated service on the governing board.

Relaxation

Planned activities and evening sessions were kept to a minimum so that delegates could have more free time than at past conferences. On Wednesday evening a wine and cheese reception was given by the San Francisco Symphony Association to welcome delegates.

Special thanks are due to the host delegates, whose hard work won them a much-deserved standing ovation. Marguerite Figeroid (San Francisco Symphony), Don O'Brien (San Francisco Ballet), Brian McCarty (San Francisco Opera), and Adrienne Blackshere (Oakland Symphony) did a superb job. Thanks also to AFM Local 6 president William Catalano, who welcomed delegates to San Francisco and who was present for the entire conference. Local 6 provided a buffet luncheon for delegates between working sessions on Thursday.

Next year's conference will be in Atlanta. August 20-24 are dates tentatively proposed.

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ICSOM ORCHESTRAS

Alabama Symphony Orchestra	Florida Symphony Orchestra	New Jersey Symphony Orchestra	Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
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Detroit Symphony Orchestra	National Symphony Orchestra	Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra	Utah Symphony Orchestra

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