

Senza Sordino

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ATLANTA SYMPHONY PLAYERS FUND SALARY INCREASES

An important part of the current three-year master contract between the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and its management is an agreement that ultimately helped end a six-week strike in 1983. It provided a means for the orchestra to involve itself in fund-raising projects, the proceeds of which would be placed in a joint trust account and distributed to the musicians as additional raises in the third year of the contract (1985-1986).

The orchestra was by no means unanimous in its desire to mount such projects, especially after six weeks of raising funds during the strike. However, the majority voted to accept management's challenge. The prevailing opinion was that we had nothing to lose. Management had met us half-way on our salary demands, and anything else we raised ourselves would be money we didn't have to negotiate for next time.

The provision was set up as follows:

- The Players Association would not compete with fund-raising efforts by management.
- Projects would be limited to voluntary concerts promoted by the players or directed to the players by management, non-musical events (fun runs, athletic tournaments), and other activities by mutual agreement.
- For every \$25,000 raised, scale would go up \$5, over-scale players benefitting proportionally. (\$25,000 was based on the actual cost to fund a \$5 raise.) The system was later modified to include \$1 per every \$5,000.
- Any amount over \$225,000 would go into the endowment fund, thus placing a cap of \$45 per week on a salary increase.
- All funds had to be in the trust account by August 31, 1985, to be applied to the 1985-86 season.

The orchestra committee had its work cut out for it. There were periods of extreme frustration. Some members refused to participate on principle, others were always too busy, some people volunteered for everything. Outside players sometimes had to be hired to fill out the orchestra. The committee had to deal with members' baby-sitting problems, last minute cancellations, and amnesia.

And these were just the personnel problems. There were also administrative aspects to deal with: negotiating and working with sometimes hysterical clients, taking care of all the stage and library arrangements, hiring arrangers and copyists, contracting and collecting the money, paying the extras, keeping track of the money, and generally spending countless hours on the telephone and in meetings, all while pursuing careers as orchestral musicians! Several large projects fell through after expending much effort.

The projects mounted were:

- 2 sets of young people's concerts and a dental convention concert that could not be scheduled by management under our contract;
- 2 corporate challenge cup events;
- a benefit at a local disco;
- the opening of a new concert hall in Covington, Georgia;
- participation in the first annual ASO radiothon;
- craft items made by orchestra members sold by volunteers at the Decorator Show House and elsewhere;
- chamber concerts at country clubs and elsewhere;
- contributions by individuals.

To make all this work, the orchestra had to function as its own board, management staff, personnel manager, collection agency, PR firm, chamber music society, and sometimes conducting staff. (Maestros Shaw and Scott also helped.) After it was all over, general manager Tom Bacchetti told us that one of the side effects hoped for in this proposition was to help us understand their position and the difficulties involved in raising money. To a great extent, he was successful.

Altogether the orchestra players raised a net of \$90,000 in 13 months and felt real pride in the accomplishment. This figure translates into an additional \$18 per week, or \$936 per year, across-the-board raise. This was not a contingency contract; our salaries would not have been cut if we failed to raise a dime. To our knowledge, this is the only such agreement in our industry. The management has repeatedly assured us that this was a one-time-only, strike-ending device, and we would certainly like to see it stay that way, both for the Atlanta Symphony and throughout the field.

Another benefit for the total organization was a closer working together with management staff, especially on concerts, and with volunteers, especially on the radiothon. The women who year after year give freely of their time to raise money to bridge the gap between earned income and the total budget were working side by side with musicians whom they previously saw only on stage, musicians who often didn't know these women existed. Closer contacts with the board and our union were established as well. Finally, the orchestra is now in a position to use its contacts to refer clients and ideas to the management, which has discovered a valuable resource they didn't know existed.

All in all it was a great learning experience for everyone concerned. An end-of-the-season party, complete with an earned-ticket raffle, helped smooth ruffled feathers. Everyone is relieved this project is over and will not recur. But the Atlanta Symphony made orchestral history with this undertaking, and we are proud of that.

Michael Moore
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra ICSOM Delegate

MUSIC ASSISTANCE FUND UPDATE

Four Orchestral Fellowships have been awarded for 1985-86 by the Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. These fellowships are administered by the Music Assistance Fund and are part of the Fund's national programs to encourage talented musicians from American minority populations to pursue careers in symphony orchestras. The fellowship recipients, all violinists, are Lesa Terry (Atlanta), Velda Kelly (Detroit), Mary Corbett-Laven (New York) and Adrian Walker (Saint Louis). Ms. Corbett-Laven and Mr. Walker, both recent graduates from the Eastman School of Music, are in their first year of the program. Ms. Terry and Ms. Kelly continue with their orchestras from the prior season.

During the 1984-85 season five fellowships were awarded. At the conclusion of the season violinist Karen Tidwell (National Symphony Orchestra), cellist Richard Brown (Buffalo Philharmonic) and violist Richard Spencer (New York Philharmonic) completed their fellowship periods; they have begun preparing for auditions.

After an initial screening, applicants for fellowships are evaluated by personal interview and audition before a committee of musicians assembled by the ICSOM representative in or near the applicant's place of residence. Upon passing the initial audition, the prospective fellow is recommended to a participating orchestra. A second audition before the music director and audition committee of that orchestra is then arranged, and fellowships are awarded upon their approval. Eligibility is limited to players of stringed instruments not under contract with orchestras designated as major or regional by the American Symphony Orchestra League.

The fellowship recipient, who comes under the direct supervision of his or her section principal, attends all rehearsals and performances of the participating orchestra and in turn receives all courtesies and privileges of regular orchestra members, including a stipend equal to the minimum pay scale. Membership in the appropriate union is required of all fellows, and each orchestra must file regular reports on their progress.

The Music Assistance Fund will make a grant to a participating orchestra of up to 75% of the fellowship costs, not to exceed \$15,000.

Success of this program is the result of a national effort on the part of ICSOM members, music directors, orchestra personnel managers, and individual orchestra musicians, who aid in the identification of potential fellows. The Fund expresses appreciation to the following ICSOM representatives who have generously given their time and expertise to the program: Lawrence Bocaner (National Symphony Orchestra), Catherine Compton (Detroit Symphony Orchestra), Michael Moore (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra), Frank Primerano (Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra), Gary Smith (Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra) and Donald Whyte (New York Philharmonic).

The Orchestral Fellowship program is one of several programs of the Music Assistance Fund. The New York Philharmonic, which was instrumental in the establishment of the Fund in 1965, recently assumed responsibility for its administration. Members of the Music Assistance Fund Advisory Committee are: Stephen Benedict, Director, Program in Arts Administration, Columbia University; Albert K. Webster, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, New York Philharmonic; Donald Whyte, violinist and ICSOM representative, New York Philharmonic; Daniel Windham, Director of Educational Activities, New York Philharmonic.

*Daniel J. Windham, Director
Music Assistance Fund
Orchestral Fellowship Program*

NEW MUSIC MEDICINE CLINICS, JOURNAL DEBUT

Two new performing arts medicine programs are getting underway in Chicago and San Francisco.

Dr. Michael Charness, professor of neurology, reports that the University of California at San Francisco Health Care Program for Performing Artists is in the final stages of organization. The program will be staffed by specialists in neurology, hand surgery, orthopedic surgery, physical medicine, rheumatology, psychiatry, internal medicine, and dentistry. All clinic members are directly affiliated with UCSF, and many are themselves performing artists. Patients are already being seen. Interested musicians may call Dr. Charness at (415) 648-7111.

Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago and the Northwestern University Medical School Department of Medicine announce the establishment of the Medical Program for Performing Artists. Program director Dr. Alice Brandfonbrener is familiar to musicians as director of health services at the Aspen Music Festival and coordinator of the Aspen summer symposia on performing arts medicine. Interested musicians may call the program office at (312) 908-ARTS.

Dr. Brandfonbrener will also edit *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, a new journal that will address clinical practice, research, and education in performing arts medicine. *MPPA* will debut in 1986. So that ICSOM orchestra musicians may see this new publication, sample complimentary copies of the premiere issue will be sent to the administrative offices of member orchestras in care of ICSOM delegates; managers and musicians who wish to do so may subscribe to future issues.

LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETS IN NEW YORK

The ICSOM Executive Committee and representatives of the Major Orchestra Managers Conference convened in New York on November 17, continuing liaison meetings begun in 1982.

Plans were made for gathering information needed to pursue the possibility of buying insurance at reduced prices through multi-employer participation. The purpose of this effort is to reduce expenditures in a time of escalating coverage costs, not to standardize benefits across the field or to restructure benefits locally negotiated.

Plans were also made for the next stages in gathering information about musicians' health and medical problems and in exploring technologies to reduce pain and discomfort due to high sound volume levels experienced by musicians during rehearsals and performances. Possibilities for funding these projects were discussed.

Attending for ICSOM were chairman Frederick Zenone, president Melanie Burrell, treasurer Penny Anderson, secretary Nancy Griffin, and *Senza Sordino* editor Tom Hall. Managers attending were David Hyslop (Saint Louis Symphony), Stephen Klein (National Symphony), Stephen Sell (Philadelphia Orchestra), Gideon Toeplitz (Houston Symphony), and Albert K. Webster (New York Philharmonic).



*Season's Greetings
from
Senza Sordino*

SETTLEMENT SUMMARIES

Settlements are reported in depth in ICSOM bulletins which are sent immediately to member orchestras; summaries of basic and interesting new provisions are noted in Senza Sordino. Orchestras are encouraged to file and consult bulletins for more detailed information.

Musicians of the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** ratified a new 3-year contract September 20. Wages (were \$620) will be \$610 plus \$10 EMG in the first year, \$635 plus \$25 EMG (6 months) / \$650 plus \$25 EMG (6 months) in the second year, and \$685 plus \$35 EMG (9 months) / \$770 with no EMG (3 months) in the final year. Seniority pay (was \$15/week for 15 years of service, \$20/20 years) will increase in the third year to \$2/week for every 5 years of service to a maximum of 20 years and no longer be absorbed into other bonuses. Pension (was \$800/month, \$9,600/year) will increase in the third year to \$40/month times years of service to maximum of \$1,200/month (\$14,400/year) for 30 years service, payable at 65.

A trial integration of first and second violin sections will occur during this contract.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra musicians ratified a 2-year contract on September 24. Wages remain at \$780 for 6 months, increase to \$840, and become \$910 in the second year. \$30/week broadcast guarantee is for 26 weeks. Pension (\$14,000) increases in the second year to \$17,000.

In addition to previously established release from 8 services per year for all strings and second-chair winds, the new contract provides for 2 more services off per year for every 5 years of service to a maximum of 8 additional services off per year. In exchange for allowing 3 Saturday services (2 youth concerts, 1 pops concert), musicians will be given 3 consecutive days off at the beginning of the same week.

After several years of wage freezes, wage increase waivers, and contract extensions, **Houston Symphony Orchestra** musicians have a new contract which will run through May of 1987. Wages (were \$630 plus \$30 EMG) increase to \$670 immediately and \$720 in June of 1986, both plus \$40 EMG. Seniority remains at \$5/5 years of service to 25 years but will be calculated from 1982 salaries, not from scale, as of June, 1986. Pension (was \$12,000) increases to \$13,500 in June of 1986.

Minnesota Orchestra musicians ratified a new 3-year contract on November 11; tentative agreement had been reached on October 16, hours before a strike deadline. Wages (were \$735 plus \$25 EMG) increase in half-year increments to \$770/\$805—\$845/\$885—\$910/\$935, all plus \$25 EMG. Pension remains at \$14,000 this year and increases to \$15,000 and \$17,000 in succeeding years. Life insurance (was \$40,000) increases to \$50,000 by the third year. HMO plan is now offered as an option to the existing fully-funded major medical coverage. In exchange for allowing more flexible scheduling, musicians achieved improved benefits for musicians already retired. Adjustments were made in scheduling of sectional rehearsals, and short acoustical rehearsals are to be allowed at double overtime pay.

Musicians of the **New York Philharmonic** ratified a new 3-year contract September 19. Wages (were \$810) increase to \$860-\$910-\$980; all musicians are guaranteed an additional \$20/week over scale. Pension increases to \$800/year of service to a maximum of 30 years. Life insurance increases from \$50,000 to \$75,000. String players in revolving section receive \$50/week bonus when filling fixed chairs. Members who keep work rotation records for revolving strings receive a \$25/week bonus.

Following very complex negotiations, **Seattle Symphony Orchestra** musicians ratified new agreements with their symphony, opera, and ballet employers October 27. All three employers pay weekly portions which amount to wage increases over 3 years from the former \$515 plus \$5 EMG to \$516.24/\$530.28 - \$563.24 - \$601.68. Season length (was 44 weeks) increases to 45 weeks, 46 weeks in the final year. Vacation remains at 40 services (35 days) the first year, increases to 42 services (37 days) in the second year, 44 services (39 days) in the third year. New joint committees were created to address recordings and broadcasts, pension benefits, and scheduling problems anticipated because of the SSO's move to a new concert hall.

On November 2 musicians of the **Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra** ratified a new 2-year contract. They had been playing without a contract since October 22; the new agreement is retroactive to that date.

Wages (were \$680 plus \$10 EMG) increase to \$780 plus \$20 EMG this season, \$810/\$850 in half-year increments next season with \$20 EMG plus \$10 radio guarantee. Seniority pay increases from \$4 to \$5 per week for every 5 years of service with no cap. Pension (was \$11,000) increases in second year to \$16,000; full pension is payable at age 60 for brass, remains at age 62 for others. Monthly pension benefits for past retirees increase by \$100. Per diem rates increase and a new \$10 bonus will apply in cities over 1 million population. Audition committee compensation is new (\$15-25 per day).

An HMO alternative is to be provided in addition to the existing medical plan. Instrument loan fund increases to \$600,000. Vacation remains at 8 weeks, with 4 now guaranteed consecutive. 5-day weeks increase in exchange for use of Thursday afternoons (formerly free). 10-service relief for second-chair winds is new.

MILWAUKEE SYMPHONY OFFERS SEMINARS

Seven 90-minute weekly seminars featuring a multidisciplinary approach to the prevention of occupational disorders were presented for members of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra during October and November. Topics included anatomy and physiology of the sensory motor system, Alexander technique, management and creativity, the brain and body in concert, and frequent disorder symptoms and prevention. Discussions held in conjunction with these topics centered on methods to prevent fatigue and improve self-regulation in performance, stress-related disorders and their prevention, and principles of bio-feedback treatment and training.

Seminars were arranged by the MSO Players Council. Management provided 80 per cent funding, leaving a cost of \$25 per musician for the set of 7 seminars.

Rip Pr at

Milwaukee Symphony ICSOM Delegate

ANNUAL ICSOM DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. A SPECIFIC BILLING HAS BEEN SENT TO EACH ORCHESTRA DELEGATE. DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT IS DECEMBER 1985. DELAYS IN PAYMENT CAN CREATE CASH FLOW PROBLEMS, AND ICSOM TREASURER PENNY ANDERSON URGES ALL ORCHESTRAS TO REMIT DUES ON TIME.

COMMITTEE CONTINUITY

We recently received a copy of a letter from a former committee member to his orchestra's newly elected committee. Because it exemplifies an effort to maintain all-important continuity from one committee to the next, and because it contains some widely applicable suggestions, we reprint it here with local specifics deleted.

At the beginning of this season, members of the orchestra elected you their new representatives. You have accepted the responsibilities of accurately representing the orchestra in its internal affairs and its dealings with management, trustees, union, and conductors. You have agreed to balance your personal judgment with that of your orchestra colleagues. Here are some suggestions to help you in this delicate, trying, serious position you have assumed.

- Present items for the orchestra's consideration in an objective manner. Of course you will have opinions, but give the orchestra the facts and rationale behind those opinions.
- When possible, post letters and notices to and from management so those who want to know can stay abreast of developments. Avoid panic meetings and last-minute explanations.
- Get the orchestra's input. People complain about having too few, not too many, opportunities to discuss and vote.
- Nurture good relations with management. Meet often with the manager to work out problems and avoid potential misunderstandings. Contrary to some opinions, everything is not black and white, them against us. There are many grey areas when dealing with management about mutual problems. If management fund-raising projects fall through, it has to be our concern as well. The long-range goals of this organization are the same for board and musicians, and those goals can be

reached sooner and more effectively if we work together and not at cross-purposes.

- Encourage our manager to continue his habit of regularly sharing news directly with the orchestra.
- Solicit orchestra participation on the board-union-musicians-management (BUMM) committee. Board members especially pick up our enthusiasm, ideas, problems, and respect.
- Stay on good terms with the union, not just the officers but the general membership, which often holds anti-symphony sentiments.
- Accept those invitations to parties and dinners with board members. Your presence is crucial to the image of the committee and the orchestra. Many board members are interesting people utterly dedicated to the continuing success of the orchestra.
- Use your ICSOM delegate to get information from ICSOM officers and from member orchestras. Our orchestra should be an active member of the national community of orchestras to which we belong. Do not hesitate to use the services of ICSOM legal counsel.
- Cultivate regular contact with the AFM Symphony Department. Lew Waldeck and Lynn Johnson are informed on many matters, especially media activity.
- Learn to negotiate. Among other things, remember that the most effective tactic may not be to put a gun to your counterpart's head but to show him why it is in his own best interests to give you what you desire. You have to be open-minded and willing to search for creative solutions to satisfy everyone.

Committee membership is often a thankless duty that gobbles up a lot of time. Keep foremost in your mind that you have a responsibility to the orchestra and that you are serving your colleagues. Such service is a sacred trust that is both an honor and a privilege.

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