

Senza Sordino

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MEDICAL SURVEY BECOMES A REALITY

A Special Report to ICSOM Orchestra Members

by ICSOM President Melanie Burrell

ICSOM has reached a final phase in one of the most significant ventures in its history: We have produced a questionnaire which gives musicians an opportunity to describe the medical problems which affect their careers. This professionally prepared survey will be sent to every orchestra member shortly after this issue of *Senza Sordino* arrives.

It is very important to the success of this project to have a very large initial sampling. The more responses we receive, the more accurate the results will be. We are therefore making a special request that each and every player in all our orchestras complete this questionnaire.

Over the past three years ICSOM has informed its musicians about continuing advancements in music medicine. ICSOM has been in the forefront in provoking action in this area. Annual ICSOM conferences, *Senza Sordino*, and ICSOM bulletins have highlighted medical conferences exploring the problems and needs of orchestral musicians, special clinics available to musicians, and the opinions of physicians who have specialized in examining and treating musicians in this country and in Australia.

Now we need your help. We need detailed information from all our orchestras about you and your professionally related medical problems:

- Do you have pain, and where?
- Do you violinists and violists have chin rest sores? What specialists have you seen for diagnosis and treatment?
- Have you had carpal tunnel surgery? What were your symptoms?
- Do you suffer from TMJ syndrome (inadvertant clenching of the jaw joint and grinding of the teeth leading to severe facial pain)?
- Do you take beta-blockers to ease the symptoms of stage fright? When and how often?
- Do you have tendinitis or bursitis? Have you had cortisone injections to ease the pain, or have you used ice or heat treatment?
- Do you have no occupational health problems? We need to learn if you are in the majority or whether most musicians suffer from some job-related medical problems.
- Have you had an accident or health problem not caused by your job but which has affected your work?

Very little is known about us musicians, and the growing interest in our particular medical needs will thrive and yield more and better treatment once we provide considerable per-

sonal data by answering these and other questions. Once again we stress that we need full participation in delivering this information.

Our sampling will cross-compare many variables: geographical distribution, season length, pit and stage environments, instrument and instrument group, sex, age group, and others. We will be able to determine, for example, how many clarinet players in a certain age group have thumb problems, whether players of other instruments have the same affliction, and the diagnoses and treatments given.

Analysis of the medical survey will be very significant and helpful to physicians who deal specifically with musicians. This will be a benchmark study for those who need to know what surgeries we have had, what treatments we pursue, what symptoms we perceive, what we as a very special population in a very specialized profession are like and how our needs differ from one instrument group to another.

Joint funding from ICSOM, the AFM, and the Major Orchestra Managers Conference has made it possible for us to formulate this questionnaire in conjunction with a prestigious research company that specializes in polling and questionnaire development.

So that musicians remain anonymous, we have devised a system to ensure that no one in ICSOM or in your orchestra organization will have access to your information. Completed forms will go directly to the research company for tabulation and statistical analysis. We will also provide consent forms for those musicians willing to participate in follow-up studies.

We expect to publish results of this survey in *Senza Sordino*.

Preparing this survey has taken hours of dedicated work by ICSOM's medical and executive committees, aided by physicians and psychologists whom we have been privileged to consult. Clearly we believe this work will benefit our professional futures and those of teachers and music students who will eventually replace us.

What is ICSOM?
A Review on page 3.

The ICSOM Delegate.
Chairman's message
on page 2.

NORTH CAROLINA MUSICIANS START SUMMER SEASON

In the summer of 1984 the players of the North Carolina Symphony launched a series of four outdoor concerts in Raleigh, the orchestra's home base. Summerfest, the first summer season in the orchestra's history, was a unique experiment in joint entrepreneurship of players, management, and trustees. The concerts were marketed, produced, and managed by a committee of three musicians. Even the programs, each built around a specific theme and featuring light classical repertoire, were planned by the Summerfest committee in conjunction with NCSO music director Gerhardt Zimmermann.

In exchange for the power to manage and implement Summerfest, the orchestra agreed to play on a profit-sharing basis, using the money earned through ticket sales as salary. Management, relieved of salary responsibility, provided \$10,000 to get the project started, help from the office staff, and use of the symphony library, stands, chairs, and truck. Because the risk for providing salary rested solely with the players, it was further agreed that if the concerts proved successful, management would assume more responsibility in each succeeding summer.

Summerfest earned \$32,000 its first season with an average audience attendance of 3,000 for each concert. The enthusiastic response of the community proved beyond question that a large classical music audience existed and that a summer season was not only viable but imperative.

Based on the success of 1984, Summerfest was expanded in 1985 with a budget of \$90,000 (up from \$10,000), four additional concerts marketed in Chapel Hill, N.C. (a total of 8), and management responsibility increased to paying one-half salary for the four-week period. Meeting the budget required the Summerfest committee to raise \$20,000 in corporate sponsorships, something never before tried on this scale with the North Carolina Symphony. \$10,000 was again contributed by the trustees, and we projected that approximately \$60,000 could be raised through ticket sales if weather conditions were optimal. The concerts were again a tremendous success, despite a \$10,000 shortfall due to inclement weather on several weekends (which prompted serious consideration of changing the name Summerfest to Thunderfest).

Summerfest will continue in 1986 with the North Carolina Symphony management assuming full responsibility for marketing and fund-raising. Salary arrangements are still under negotiation. The Summerfest committee will be responsible only for aiding the music director in programming.

Thanks are due to the players of the North Carolina Symphony; the symphony staff; Mr. Peyton Woodson, chairman of the board; maestros Gerhardt Zimmermann and James Ogle; Thomas McGuire, executive director during the first Summerfest season; and Frederick Arnold, director of marketing. Special thanks go to Dr. Banks C. Talley, Jr., present executive director, for his expertise and sure-handed guidance over a sometimes difficult but always enthusiastic committee of three musicians:

*Jimmy Gilmore
Michael Cyzewski
Robert Anderson*

Many musicians might prefer not to risk such a venture involving self-marketing and self-management at reduced salary, but the NCSO musicians seem to have found this a satisfying experience, and we appreciate their sharing their story with us.

DELEGATE STRUCTURE VITAL TO ICSOM SUCCESS

One of the extraordinary features of ICSOM is that it is strictly a volunteer organization. As such its success has been, and will continue to be, dependent on the commitment and excellence of those persons ICSOM member orchestras choose to represent them at the annual conference and throughout the year.

In addition to being performers, delegates assume a dual responsibility as labor representatives, for they have obligations both to the individual home orchestra and to ICSOM as an organization of many orchestras. Ideally these responsibilities are always parallel.

At home, delegates must share the information gained at the annual conference, knowledge about negotiation, pension plans, fringe benefits, working conditions, electronic media activity. They must gather and report specific information their orchestras direct them to get from other orchestras about working conditions, artistic matters, labor-management relations and their implementation. Each delegate must make the conference aware of the concerns of his or her member orchestra.

On behalf of ICSOM, delegates are responsible for carrying out the administrative duties of collecting and processing ICSOM dues, wage chart information, AFM Strike Fund contributions, and conductor evaluations, preparing reports for *Senza Sordino* and ICSOM bulletins, maintaining liaison with major committees and with other orchestras.

These workaday chores keep our organization operating, but the real life and energy of our organization is the exchange of ideas among orchestras and between each orchestra and ICSOM.

It is each delegate's responsibility to establish within the member orchestra the dialogue and discussion that enables the delegate to effectively represent that orchestra at conference and throughout the year. Delegates are constantly asked for opinions on issues. Other orchestras want to hear not only the individual's personal opinion but also that of the orchestra represented. When delegates have been listening to their orchestras and have been convincing with their colleagues, these opinions are likely to be the same; if they are not, the difference must be noted. It is the delegate's responsibility to try to convince the conference of the validity of the opinion presented, but the delegate must also be willing to share conference decisions with the orchestra back home. Delegates must be willing to take back convincing and informed opinion that may be different from that with which they came.

Too often delegates return home with the message, "I have been to the annual conference and I am convinced." This is not a position that will enlighten or persuade an orchestra. Few people at conference or at home will act as a result of such a statement. Because ICSOM is a rank-and-file organization, one which does not make agreement a condition of membership, it relies on delegates' power to persuade and their willingness to be persuaded.

Clearly each orchestra should select from among its leadership a delegate who is a seasoned musician, who represents the orchestra and deals regularly with its problems, and who is a responsible, informed, and persuasive individual. To choose someone whose Aunt Minnie lives at the annual conference site is to short-change both the member orchestra and the national organization.

*Frederick Zenone
ICSOM Chairman*

ICSOM: A REVIEW

To persons long affiliated with the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, and to delegates who attend its annual meetings, the purposes and values of ICSOM may be clear and self-evident. For those new to the ranks of symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras, for those who have never gotten actively involved, for those outside the profession, and for those who (especially at dues-paying time) question the worth of ICSOM, we periodically provide a review and explanation.

ICSOM was formally established in 1962 in Chicago and Cleveland by delegates from U.S. and Canadian orchestras. Dedicated to "the promotion of a better and more rewarding livelihood for the skilled orchestral performer and to the enrichment of the cultural life of our society," ICSOM has held annual meetings at which delegates have actively addressed the problems of the orchestra musician. Success is evident in comparison.

- In 1962 most musicians in major symphony orchestras were employed little more than six months annually at a yearly salary that was barely a living wage, about \$4,000. Today 17 orchestras have year-round seasons, and the average season length of ICSOM's symphony orchestras is 46 weeks. Salaries, pensions, and insurance benefits have increased considerably over the last 25 years.

- Before ICSOM only one orchestra (Boston) participated directly in the negotiation of its own contract, and no orchestras had the opportunity to approve the contracts negotiated for them by union representatives who, often being ill-informed about symphony orchestra matters, concluded agreements which incorporated token salary increases and minimal improvements in working conditions. No orchestra could hire its own attorney to participate in negotiations. Today most orchestras have bargaining representation. Contract ratification rights became a part of national union bylaws in 1983. Many orchestras can retain legal counsel of choice. Orchestras may form committees, elect their own officers, and conduct their own affairs.

- Before ICSOM, musicians had little job security and were subject to immediate and arbitrary dismissal. Considerable improvements have been made in probation and tenure provisions over the years. Contract protections now exist against discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, and union activity.

- An ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund was established in 1965; this loan fund has grown to over \$90,000. An AFM Strike Fund was established in 1970 and to date has disbursed over \$1.8 million to 27 different orchestras which were on strike or locked out.

- In 1962 the American Federation of Musicians, fearing dual unionism and dilution of its authority, was antagonistic to ICSOM, but it finally granted ICSOM official conference status in 1969. An AFM Symphony Department, long sought by ICSOM, was created the same year. ICSOM has become directly involved in negotiating national recording and media contracts, most notably the audio-visual agreement, which provides musicians with unprecedented revenue sharing.

- Before ICSOM, communication between orchestras about their mutual concerns was random and informal. Now much exchange of information takes place at ICSOM's annual convention, five days of workshops, addresses by guest speakers, special reports, deliberation, and recommendations for action by ICSOM's governing board and executive committee. ICSOM's official newsletter, *Senza Sordino*, publishes negotiation news and articles of general interest six times a year, reaching not only member orchestras but also orchestra managers and board members, local unions, foreign orchestras, critics, libraries, music schools, and many government and arts organizations across

the country. Interim bulletins are issued when rapid dissemination of information to members is necessary. The ICSOM wage chart, originally printed in *Senza Sordino*, is now published annually by the AFM; the current chart provides information on 77 collective bargaining issues.

- To provide exchange of information on the qualifications of conductors, ICSOM instituted a conductor evaluation program in 1970 and today provides computerized tabulation of musician's appraisals of over 200 conductors.

- Since 1968 ICSOM has retained its own legal counsel to advise on the national level and to be at the disposal of orchestras at the local level. ICSOM has been fortunate to have the counsel of the distinguished I. Philip Sipser and Leonard Leibowitz for many years. ICSOM currently retains the firm of Leibowitz and DuBrul of New York City.

ICSOM continues to address concerns of today's musician.

Since 1976 ICSOM has been involved with the Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowships, a program which assists talented minority-group instrumentalists gain valuable professional experience by playing in major symphony orchestras as extra musicians. ICSOM members adjudicate auditions to select suitable performers, and several ICSOM orchestras have chosen to have qualified musicians play with them for a season.

To aid in the instruction of potential professional musicians, ICSOM recently assisted the AFM in the reorganization of the Congress of Strings. ICSOM also funds three COS scholarships.

ICSOM is at the forefront of addressing job-related health problems. A prime example is the current medical survey of ICSOM orchestras.

ICSOM provides information to help orchestras on strike or locked out, but it has also worked to alleviate adversarial attitudes between managers and musicians and to inform orchestras about the advantages and problems of joint musician-manager-trustee committees. Locally, many musicians now have greater participation in affairs of their orchestras, especially in the selection of music directors and managers. On the national level, the recently formulated and approved code of ethical audition practices is an example of cooperation between ICSOM and the Major Orchestra Managers Conference.

Solving new problems and reaching new goals can be accomplished, as in the past, only through cooperative effort, with ICSOM providing the means for exchanging ideas and the ways to implement them.

Today ICSOM is a family of 48 member orchestras which vary greatly in size, financial stability, managerial adeptness, artistic accomplishment, and professional stature. What some orchestras attained years ago, other orchestras are still trying to achieve. The largest and smallest orchestras may be very different in many ways, yet they meet and work together in an organization whose existence is predicated on principles of solidarity, team effort, and mutual support.

The dynamics and values of ICSOM parallel those within the individual orchestra. No member is unimportant, and none can stand alone. No member orchestra can afford to isolate itself and remain aloof from united support, certain of survival as others succumb. No orchestra has achieved improvements over two decades solely on its own enterprise, knowledge, and unity. The same collaboration which won the gains of the past must help defend and retain those gains today.

ICSOM is a volunteer organization supported entirely by membership dues. The quality of services it offers varies in direct proportion to the involvement of its membership. It will falter in direct proportion to apathy and complacency; it will flourish in direct proportion to enthusiasm and dedicated participation.

MINNESOTA MUSICIANS WORK WITH JOSEPH GINGOLD

On October 14-15, 1985, Minneapolis welcomed world-renowned violinist and teacher Joseph Gingold. Gingold, former concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra and now Distinguished Professor of Music at Indiana University, conducted a four-hour private seminar in violin exclusively for members of the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Professor Gingold also conducted two public events, a string pedagogy class sponsored by the MacPhail Center for the Arts, and a master class sponsored by MacPhail, the Minnesota Orchestral Association, and the Women's Association of the Minnesota Orchestra.

The event was initiated and organized by Minnesota Orchestra violinists Julie Ayer and Roger Frisch. It was a special privilege and an inspiration to all to share the special warmth and intellect of master musician Joseph Gingold.

*Paul Murphy
Minnesota Orchestra ICSOM Delegate*

SAN ANTONIO UNION HOLDS HEALTH FAIR

Earlier this season San Antonio Local 23 put on a health fair offering free medical testing for union members and their families. Such a service would have been appreciated at any time, but it was particularly welcome as we San Antonio Symphony members were recovering from the financial impact of our 1985 strike. Impetus for the health fair came from a local member not in the orchestra; she requested a liaison from the orchestra, and in that capacity I helped plan the fair.

Because most musicians have personal physicians, we decided that the fair should address job-related health concerns. Because we share our building with the carpenters union, we invited the carpenters to participate in the free testing, an offer which they happily accepted.

We staffed our health fair with an audiologist, optometrist, dentist, nurses, medical technicians, occupational therapists, and volunteers. These people generously donated their services, including literature and consultations. We evaluated blood pressure, vision, hand and muscle problems, hearing, oral health, and tested for glaucoma. With the exception of the hearing test, performed in a quiet area of the building, all activity took place in one large room; people lined up for the tests that interested them. In four hours we saw 150 persons. Fourteen orchestra members and several other union members donated their time as volunteers. Probably the most unusual assignment for volunteers was learning to operate a Titmus Vision Tester, used to evaluate depth perception, color blindness, and visual acuity (near- and far-sightedness). One of the orchestra librarians found vision testing so rewarding that he signed on to help the optometrist in future health fairs in San Antonio. The last stop for most people was the refreshment table, where health foods were sold to defray the cost of mailings promoting the fair.

Most people who attended the fair were enthusiastic. Because immediate families were invited, union members with children realized substantial savings by having the entire family screened. The fair favored no special sector of the union, and orchestra members could participate on an equal footing with non-orchestral musicians and carpenters.

We now look back and wish we had done some things differently. Many musicians were eager to have their hearing tested. However, the audiologist brought machines which measured only 250 to 6,000 cycles per second, whereas a thorough hearing test would measure 20 to 20,000 cps. Persons who wanted

to obtain a baseline measurement of their hearing were disappointed upon discovering the limitations of the test. By far the most crowded test was the vision screening. It would have been worthwhile to have at least four Titmus machines; each test takes about ten minutes, and with only two machines we had a four-hour traffic jam.

Based on the success of this first health fair, our local wants to make this an annual event. We hope to incorporate additional testing and information in future fairs. Because many musicians work in theaters with asbestos curtains, we should be monitoring exposure to this harmful substance. We want to include lung capacity measurement in our next fair, a test of special interest to woodwind and brass players. Another concern is performance stress and its resultant health problems. We are considering inviting local experts to talk to us about Inderal, biofeedback, the Alexander technique, and similar topics.

A health fair is an interesting way to explore some of the ailments of musicians and is a project with positive results for everyone. At no cost to itself, Local 23 provided its membership and the carpenters union with access to free health care in a pleasant setting. Because health maintenance is of concern to almost everyone, we found that the fair was a unifying project for our organization and an activity in which more people than usual took part. Our contact with the health care workers and the non-orchestral participants was rewarding and led to new friendships. Perhaps the greatest benefit was the tangible demonstration of our union's concern for our well-being.

*Debbie Torch
San Antonio Symphony*

FORMER SENZA SORDINO EDITOR VANCE BEACH DIES

Vance Beach died in California on January 17, 1986. Los Angeles Philharmonic committee chair Jeanne Aiken has provided this information on her colleague.

Vance Beach joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1952. He became very active on the orchestra committee and never hesitated to take an unpopular position if he felt it advanced the cause of the musicians personally and artistically. He attended the meetings at which ICSOM was created and served for many years as delegate to ICSOM and as editor of *Senza Sordino* from 1970 to 1972. He left the orchestra in 1972 upon being elected secretary of Local 47 and editor of *Overture*. As a union officer he further aided the Los Angeles Philharmonic by participating in negotiations.

ICSOM joins the many who remember Vance Beach as a valued friend and colleague in expressing sympathy to his wife, Myrtle, and their son, Vance Jr.

ERRATUM: Figures for the National Symphony given in the wage chart in the February issue were incorrect. Minimum wage for the current year is \$755 for 19 weeks and \$795 for 33 weeks (\$40,580 annually); minimum wage for those receiving maximum seniority benefits is \$855 for 19 weeks and \$895 for 33 weeks (\$45,780 annually). The editor regrets this error.

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