

# Senza Sordino

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## Detroit Symphony Orchestra Settlement

The 12-week lockout suffered by the musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 1987 was in many ways typical of work stoppages endured by orchestra musicians throughout the country. Management's actions precipitated financial problems for which the musicians were forced to pay. Negotiations were characterized by unfair labor practices.

The lack of vision on the executive board was unsettling, to say the least. They presented a non-negotiable 11% cut in wages to the musicians as a first and final offer just two days before the last contract expired. The board decided that there was no way to address the accumulated deficit except by cutting salaries, even at the risk of a lengthy work stoppage. The artistic impact of such a trauma on the orchestra was not considered very important.

Now that we have a settlement, the vision of the executive board appears to be limited to mere survival. With budgets being cut to reduce the requirement for new funds, no real growth is projected for the organization in the near future.

Our tale of woe may seem all too familiar, but the 1987 DSO lockout had two very positive and unusual aspects which deserve elaboration.

During the recent 12-week lockout, the DSO musicians produced far more concerts than during the 9-week lockout of 1975. Drawing on the experience gained in 1975, last summer we organized a large, hard-working concert production committee which was able to spring quickly into action when needed.

During the 1987 lockout, the musicians performed eight concerts which generated revenue needed to pay for our benefits, which had been cut off. Our insurance premiums totaled nearly \$30,000 per month. Rather than offering an alternative season, as some orchestras have been forced to do, we produced concerts on a week-by-week basis. The concert production committee's duties included:

- reserving halls for rehearsals and performances
- selecting and securing conductors, soloists, and repertoire
- managing orchestra personnel
- advertising and promoting on a budget of \$500 per concert
- producing printed programs
- printing and sales of tickets
- securing proper insurance coverage (liability insurance was secured through Local 5)
- hiring security personnel and stagehands

Obviously, this required enormous dedication on the part of all involved. Add to these duties the need to work with little over one week's lead time, plus the need to avoid scheduling performances on dates which would conflict with DSO concerts, should we achieve a settlement, and the effort became truly Herculean.

The musicians themselves were the main sales force for

tickets, but we also had a telephone "hotline" installed. We were able to accept payment by credit card, and eventually, we were even able to accept tickets to canceled DSO concerts for admission to our own concerts! Once the DSO management offered refunds to patrons holding tickets to canceled concerts, we accepted such tickets for admission or as donations, and collected the refunds ourselves. This development occurred late in the work stoppage, but still generated nearly \$2,000.

Variety was an important factor in the success of our concerts, which included one with no soloist or conductor, a pops program, a holiday sing-along, and an in-school concert. The most gratifying aspect of these concerts was the large and diverse audience we drew, demonstrating that support indeed exists in Detroit for a major orchestra. That so many people attended on short notice to hear the orchestra (as opposed to a famous soloist or conductor) illustrated our contention that promoting the DSO should be our marketing department's top priority.

Perhaps of particular interest to our orchestra colleagues was the unique involvement of organized labor in facilitating our settlement. In the final two weeks of the lockout, officials from the Metro Detroit and Michigan AFL-CIO, the UAW, the Teamsters, and the Detroit Federation of Teachers became actively and visibly involved in the work stoppage. Many of these same individuals had been providing help to the musicians behind the scenes throughout our crisis. When these labor leaders went public with their effort to help reach a settlement, they stated that they could hardly claim to be impartial. Nevertheless, they fought long and hard to get the two sides back together, rather than to secure a decisive victory for labor. This diplomatic effort eventually yielded a 3-year contract.

The DSO management and board had repeatedly cited the deficit when denying the financial improvements we sought in order for the DSO to keep its place among the top ten American orchestras. The labor leaders reasoned that a promise to help eliminate the deficit might help the DSO management and board commit to a contract. After several days of intense sessions between leaders from organized labor and the DSO management and board, such commitments were achieved. A coalition of leaders from organized labor, government, and the private sector pledged to assist in a joint effort with our board to eliminate the accumulated deficit within two years. It would have been difficult, in the face of this unprecedented offer, for the board to continue citing the deficit as a reason to resist negotiating a realistic settlement.

We are all now cautiously optimistic about the future. Nevertheless, a great deal of work must now be done, and time will tell whether excellence in all levels of our organization will be achieved.

Stacey Wooley  
Chairman, Detroit Symphony Negotiating Committee

## Taped Resume or Taped Audition? 1987 ICSOM Survey

By the 1982 ICSOM Conference, the use of tapes in the audition process seemed to be an idea whose time had come. Too many candidates had spent too much money in the search for jobs, and audition committees were struggling to deal with increasing numbers of applicants for positions. Thus, the motivations for using tapes included saving a great deal of money for candidates, as well as saving time and energy for committees. It seemed that the ultimate goal - hiring highly qualified musicians to fill vacancies - would be well served by the use of tapes. The question, six years later, is whether that goal is being served.

At the 1987 conference, ICSOM delegates unanimously approved a resolution reaffirming support for the use of performance tapes only as an adjunct to written resumes. Additionally, the resolution encouraged all orchestras to hold completely open auditions, allowing all applicants who wish to play a live preliminary audition the opportunity to do so, including applicants whose written resumes or tapes may have warranted discouraging them from further participation.

Yet, of 40 orchestras responding to a 1987 ICSOM poll on current audition practices, over half of the 27 orchestras using tapes consider them preliminary auditions, a practice in direct contradiction to the position taken by their representatives at the ICSOM conference. Sixteen of the twenty-seven orchestras using tapes refuse live auditions to those candidates whose tapes do not meet a certain standard, and an additional few relent only when a candidate is particularly persistent. Recently, only five applicants were allowed to play live auditions for a string position in a major orchestra; unfortunately, this may not be an isolated occurrence.

Revealing a startling lack of consistency, thirteen orchestras have several audition committees which function independently, creating their own policies on how tapes are used. Even within the same orchestra, whether tapes are considered part of a resume or a preliminary audition varies from one committee to another. Also, eighteen orchestras require tapes of some but not all candidates; most often, those exempted are local substitutes and applicants from other major orchestras. Fully two-thirds of the time, only a part of the audition committee screens the tapes; in some instances, only the principal of the section listens to them. Consider the implication when this practice is combined with refusing live auditions on the basis of the tapes.

In a couple of instances, applicants whose tapes warrant letters of discouragement are accepted to audition with one or two letters of recommendation from teachers or other professionals. As mentioned previously, many orchestras do not require tapes of musicians already working in major orchestras; the New York Philharmonic also exempts musicians in the Music Assistance Fund Orchestral Fellowship program. Al Couch, ICSOM Delegate of the Cleveland Orchestra, refers to his orchestra's use of tapes as an "appeals court" for those musicians whose written resumes would not warrant an invitation; and John DeJarnatt, Seattle Symphony ICSOM Delegate, points out that 30-40% of the winning candidates in Seattle in the last three years sent tapes to support unimpressive written resumes. Most consistent with the ICSOM resolution are those orchestras which accept anyone desiring a live audition, including musicians whose written and taped resumes have prompted their receiving letters of discouragement.

Perhaps no single system can function ideally for all orchestras which use tapes. However, some guidelines and standardization, such as the AFM audition lists, seem appropriate. Only a few orchestras use them to save applicants the expense of having to make new tapes for every audition.

Part of our responsibility as orchestral musicians is to recognize and deal with the inequities and inconsistencies in the audition process. As Dave Kirk, Houston Symphony ICSOM Delegate observed, "In our quest for convenience, we may have lost compassion for our colleagues."

Let's not forget what it was like when we sought jobs in this profession. We must be diligent in maintaining the fairness that we have worked so hard to achieve.

*Katherine White*  
*Denver Symphony ICSOM Delegate*

## Settlement in San Antonio

On the eve of the one-year anniversary of a labor dispute sparked by the board's demand that San Antonio Symphony players renegotiate the final year of a 4-year contract, players ratified an agreement granting three years of concessions in pay and length of season in exchange for better working conditions and representation on the board. Although all players under contract during the 1986-87 season have been offered contracts through the 1988-89 season, the size of the orchestra can be reduced through attrition. Wages, length of season, pension, and size of orchestra will be renegotiated in the final year, with minimums guaranteed by the employer.

As chronicled in the December 1987 issue of *Senza Sordino*, the board canceled the 1987-88 season and the players produced a series of classical concerts as the musician-managed Orchestra San Antonio. San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros exerted pressure on the OSA board, San Antonio Symphony board, and the players to reach a settlement. The Mayor promised to reinstate more than \$400,000 of escrowed city funding normally designated for the orchestra.

The players resumed working for the San Antonio Symphony on January 4, 1988. The nine-member OSA board has been invited to join the San Antonio Symphony board for this 22-week season, with four OSA members having votes on the executive committee. For the term of the contract, musicians will serve on each of the board's standing committees and will have votes on the general board, executive committee, and music director search committee. The remainder of the OSA concerts have been incorporated into the San Antonio Symphony season.

The orchestra's associate principal clarinetist, who was OSA's public relations director during the work stoppage, has accepted the position of marketing director for the San Antonio Symphony. At the first service following the four-month work stoppage, the players learned that Mary Watkins, who had served throughout the dispute as orchestra chairman, negotiating committee chairman, and OSA vice-president and managing director, would be the new orchestra manager for the San Antonio Symphony.

The network of financial and moral support provided by our orchestra colleagues across the country has been invaluable, and has moved us to raise money for other troubled orchestras.

*Terry Franco*  
*San Antonio Symphony ICSOM Delegate*

## 1987-1988 Symphony Wage Chart

This chart is based on information provided by ICSOM delegates. The first column of figures below shows the minimum weekly wage and, where applicable, the minimum weekly wage for players with maximum career service benefits. A plus (+) indicates that such experience increments are paid in addition to any over-scale payments; a minus (-) indicates that this pay is absorbed into any over-scale payments. The second column expresses these wages as annual guarantees. Electronic media guarantees (EMG's) and principal overscales are not calculated in the chart data. For more detailed information, consult ICSOM bulletins and the AFM wage chart.

Orchestra	Weeks	Weekly minimum salary + maximum seniority benefit	Annual guaranteed salary + maximum seniority benefit
Alabama	40	\$475	\$19,000
Atlanta	52	707.50 - 747.50* (-)	36,790 - 38,870
Baltimore	52	{685 - 693 (+) {770 - 778 (+)	36,725 - 37,141
Boston	52	1,000 - 1,050 (+)	52,000 - 54,600
Buffalo	44	584 - 604 (-)	25,696 - 26,576
Chicago	52	1,000 - 1,035 (+)	52,000 - 53,820
Cincinnati	52	795 - 835 (+)	41,340 - 43,420
Cleveland	52	950 - 1,010 (+)	49,400 - 52,520
Dallas	52	760 - 775 (+)	39,520 - 40,300
Denver	41	626.40 - 646.40 (-)	25,682 - 26,502
Detroit <sup>1</sup>	52	910 - 930 (+)	36,400 - 37,200
Florida Orch.	38	450 - 490* (+)	17,100 - 18,620
Florida Sym.	39	470 - 510*	18,330 - 19,890
Grant Park			
Honolulu	38	{439.96 {453.16	16,970
Houston	52	683.37 - 708.37 (+)	34,329 - 35,629
Indianapolis	50	{637 - 657 (+) {660 - 680 (+)	32,425 - 33,425
Los Angeles	52	{970 - 1,020 (+) {980 - 1,030 (+)	50,700 - 53,300
Louisville	39	455.70	17,722
Milwaukee	46	720 - * (+)	33,120 - 33,620
Minnesota	52	{910 - * (+) {935 (+)	47,970 - 48,270
National	52	880 - 1,020 (+)	45,760 - 53,040
New Jersey	22+5	630 - 650	17,010 - 17,550
New Orleans <sup>2</sup>	33	543	7,602
New York Phil.	52	1,000 - 1,030 (+)	52,000 - 53,560
North Carolina	40	563 - 583 (+)	22,520 - 23,320
Oakland		no 1987-88 season	
Oklahoma			
Oregon	43	551.03	23,143
Philadelphia	52	1,000 - 1,060	52,000 - 55,120
Phoenix	39	540	21,060
Pittsburgh <sup>3</sup>	52	915 - 955 (+)	47,580 - 49,660
Rochester <sup>1</sup>	52	581 - *	27,307 - *
St. Louis			
St. Paul	40	895	35,800
San Antonio <sup>2</sup>	22	560 - 595 (+)	12,320 - 13,090
San Diego	32	560	18,400
San Francisco <sup>1</sup>	52	{915 - 940.96 (+) {975 - 1,010 (+)	48,030 - 49,671.52
Seattle	46	601.68	27,677
Syracuse	44	531 - *	23,363 - 23,723
Utah	52	{530 {550	28,080
Chicago Lyric	21	930 - *	19,530
Kennedy Center			
Met Opera	45+7	918	
NYC City Ballet	26+3	786.52 - 836.52 (+)	23,279.30 - 24,579.30
NYC Opera	26+6	719.29 - 779.29*	21,902.25 - 22,599.41
SF Ballet			
SF Opera	20	970	34,000

Note: Opera and ballet orchestra figures do not include rehearsal pay. Metropolitan Opera pay is for 4 weekly performances. Number after + indicates Supplemental Unemployment Benefit (SUB) weeks. Annual wages including guaranteed minimum day rehearsal pay are San Francisco Opera (85 hours) and New York City Ballet (75 hours).

\* For seniority pay in Atlanta, Florida Orchestra, Florida Symphony (\$1/week/year of service), New York City Opera (\$1.50/wk/yr), and St. Louis (\$5/wk/yr), there is no cap on number of years of service; dollar figure provided is based on 40 years of service. Rochester has \$30 per year of service to maximum of weekly salary, paid lump sum. Minnesota and Syracuse also pay lump sums annually. Milwaukee pays lump sums at 5-year intervals. Chicago Lyric figure is 2% of weekly minimum.

1. Annual wages in Detroit, Rochester, and San Francisco reflect work stoppages of 12, 5, and 2 weeks, respectively.

2. Annual wages in New Orleans and San Antonio reflect partial season cancellations.

3. Pittsburgh will negotiate its 1987-88 contract late in the season, with terms retroactive to Fall 1987. Figures given are for 1986-87 season.

*Prepared by Tom Hall, Chicago Symphony ICSOM Delegate*

### As We Go To Press

**San Francisco Symphony** settled after a brief strike.

**Vancouver Symphony** board of directors announced January 26 that the orchestra will cease operations immediately.

**Nashville Symphony** board of directors voted February 3 to shut down for the season as of February 5.

### ICSOM Governing Board Meeting

On February 7-8, 1988, the ICSOM Governing Board met in New York to plan the 1988 conference and discuss ongoing ICSOM projects. Reports were presented on the activities of the affirmative action, conductor evaluation, insurance for retirees, structure, beta-blockers, instrument transportation, and media committees. We discussed ways of improving data gathering. Updates on troubled ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM orchestras and orchestra-union relations were presented. Plans are underway for a meeting of negotiating orchestras this spring.

## Settlement Summaries

**Milwaukee:** ratified a 3-year agreement September 8. Wages (were \$672.50) go to \$720, 770, 820. Length of season remains 46 weeks. Pension (formerly \$18/month/year of service) doubles over the life of the contract. Improvements in disability insurance, leave of absence, working conditions, and overtime. New provisions for instrument insurance and instrument loan fund. Practice facility clause (IRS) states that musicians must provide own facilities for practice.

**Florida Symphony:** 3-year agreement ratified September 21. Season remains 39 weeks. Wages (were \$420, 470) will be \$470, 493.50, 513. Tax-deferred savings contribution and long-term disability insurance to begin in third year of contract. Improvements in grievance procedure.

**Detroit:** 3-year agreement ratified December 14. Wages (were \$910) will be \$910, 940, 970/1000/1060. Seniority doubles in third year to \$2/week/year of service. Pension increases from \$17,000 to \$20,000 for all three years; broadcast guarantee increases from \$30 to \$40. Severance pay will be 25% to 100% of annual scale depending on the player's years of service. Musicians are empowered to cancel the 1989 European tour if language for the tour cannot be successfully negotiated. New symphony liaison committee formed, consisting of musicians, management, board members, and music director.

**San Antonio:** 2-1/2-year agreement ratified December 17. (1987-88 season had been cancelled.) Wages (would have been \$545 plus \$15 EMG) will be \$560, 560/575, 575/600. Season (would have been 40 guaranteed and 3 possible extra weeks) will be 22, 37, 39 weeks. Minimum size of orchestra (was 82) may be reduced through attrition to 66, 73, 75. All contracted players from the 86-87 season were offered contracts through 1988-89. Pension (was \$15/month/year of service) decreased to \$13, 13, 14. Wages, length of season, size of orchestra, and pension to be reopened in final year with minimums stated above guaranteed by employer. Improvements in service/workload. Musicians to serve on all board standing committees, general board, and executive board.

## New Orleans Season Canceled

Five years of financial crisis culminated on January 11, 1988, in the cancellation of the remainder of the 1987-88 New Orleans Symphony season. The final concert on January 16 ended with the last movement of the Haydn "Farewell" Symphony.

The collapse was accelerated in the spring of 1987 when the board refused to market the 1987-88 season until the players ratified a contract which reduced the season to 33 weeks. The players agreed to these terms in June, but marketing did not begin until late August. As a result, the season opening was postponed until mid-October, and approximately 40% of the subscribers chose not to renew. In addition, the annual fund drive, scheduled to open in November, started late and was aborted in January. Moreover, there has been no director of development since last spring.

The cash problems which have plagued the orchestra for five years continued over the summer. The players were owed 2- 1/2 weeks of back pay from the 1986-87 season, and in the fourth week of the 87-88 season, paychecks again fell behind. By January 3, the players were five full weeks behind.

Beginning in June 1987, the board found itself divided over the question of whether to continue operations. Virtually every meeting was devoted to this debate, and finally those who wanted to stop became the majority.

The board has not filed for bankruptcy, or addressed the problems of back pay, insurance benefits, or ticket refunds. A task force organized by the board to study the possibility of resuming is headed by one of the board officers who voted to cancel the season.

The players are still owed 4-1/2 weeks pay for work already performed; the orchestra committee is presently negotiating to continue medical and instrument insurance. Although the situation appears bleak and no one knows what will happen, everyone seems to expect some resolution.

*Douglas Cade*  
New Orleans Symphony ICSOM Delegate

### ICSOM Governing Board

#### Chairperson

Melanie Burrell  
Denver Symphony  
415 Garfield Street  
Denver, CO 80206  
Phone: (303) 331-9263

#### Chairperson's Assistant

Tom Hall  
2800 N. Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60657  
Phone: (312) 327-6939

#### Secretary

Nancy Page Griffin  
Seattle Symphony  
P.O. Box 20013, Broadway Station  
Seattle, WA 98102  
Phone: (206) 329-3118

#### Treasurer

Florence Nelson  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
104 Executive Drive  
Manhasset Hills, NY 11040  
Phone: (516) 627-0197

#### Editor, Senza Sordino

Deborah Torch  
San Antonio Symphony  
2922 Abercorn Drive  
San Antonio, TX 78247  
Phone: (512) 496-2605

#### Member-at-Large

James Clute  
Minnesota Orchestra  
447 Newton Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55405  
Phone: (612) 374-9373

#### Member-at-Large

Richard Decker  
Syracuse Symphony  
418 Seneca Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13205  
Phone: (315) 469-6854

#### Member-at-Large

Tom Hall  
Chicago Symphony  
2800 Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60657  
Phone: (312) 327-6939

#### Member-at-Large

Michael Nutt  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
1075 W. Kensington Road  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: (213) 977-0222

### ICSOM Orchestras

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Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Florida Orchestra  
Florida Symphony Orchestra  
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra  
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra  
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Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Louisville Orchestra  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Minnesota Orchestra

National Symphony Orchestra  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra  
New York City Ballet Orchestra  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
New York Philharmonic  
North Carolina Symphony Orchestra  
Oakland Symphony Orchestra  
Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra  
Oregon Symphony Orchestra  
Philadelphia Orchestra  
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra  
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra  
Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra  
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra  
San Antonio Symphony Orchestra  
San Diego Symphony Orchestra  
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra  
San Francisco Opera Orchestra  
San Francisco Symphony  
Seattle Symphony Orchestra  
Syracuse Symphony Orchestra  
Utah Symphony Orchestra

#### Counsel

Leibowitz and DuBrul  
3 East 54th Street  
New York, NY 10022  
Phone: (212) 593-3310

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DEBORAH TORCH, Editor  
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