

# Senza Sordino

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## Putting In Our Two Cents' Worth On Artistic Advisory Committees

Increasingly, negotiation issues of the ICSOM orchestras involve artistic matters alongside the classic issues of working conditions, benefits, and compensation. The collective bargaining agreements of many ICSOM orchestras reflect a need for greater input through the use of a committee whose sole purpose is to advise management and artistic staff on important issues. This committee has become known as an Artistic Advisory Committee (AAC), although in various orchestras it may be known as Musician Advisory, Artistic Liaison, or Operations and Development Committee.

### Composition of the AAC

Of 35 orchestras responding to an ICSOM survey during February-March 1988, 28 have committees which deal specifically with artistic issues. These Artistic Advisory Committees, while separate from the Orchestra (Members, Players) Committees, often have members of the Orchestra Committee serving as part of the AAC. Additionally, most orchestras require the inclusion of various principal players.

### What the AAC Does

In general, the responsibilities of Artistic Advisory Committees include consulting and advising in the areas of staff and guest conductors, educational programs, repertoire, and guest artists. Almost every delegate responding to the survey noted that discussions of individual orchestra members are forbidden, often by specific contract language.

In some orchestras, results of ICSOM Conductor Evaluations are reviewed by the AAC in order to make recommendations regarding future conductors. In those orchestras that do not have an AAC, artistic matters may be addressed by the Orchestra Committee. A significant number of delegates characterized the activities and influence of artistic committees as clearly secondary to those of the Orchestra Committee.

### Attitudes About the AAC

Asked to assess their orchestra's attitudes towards Artistic Advisory Committees, nineteen delegates believed their orchestras basically supported their AACs, four orchestras could be considered neutral or difficult to assess, and five orchestras were represented to have varying levels of dissatisfaction or apathy toward the concept.

Delegates often qualified their remarks when describing positive attitudes toward the AAC. Some delegates noted that while

they believed their orchestras were supportive of and pleased with their Artistic Advisory Committee, ex-AAC members were often dissatisfied and skeptical.

### Disenchantment in Some Orchestras

Among the problems that former AAC members cited was the AAC being used as a forum for venting frustration rather than for addressing the musicians' legitimate artistic concerns. Another complaint centered around the division caused by having too many committees: some delegates believed that their managements used the AAC to go around the Orchestra Committee on crucial issues. Since most AACs reported rarely, if at all, to their orchestras and were seldom required to report, some delegates questioned how adequately an AAC can represent its orchestra. Other criticisms dealt with the advisory nature of the AAC ("no teeth"). Such negative sentiment runs deep: the National Symphony abolished its AAC as part of a recent contract settlement (June 1987), and several other delegates told of movements to do away with the Artistic Advisory Committee in recent or forthcoming contract negotiations.

### Positive Results in Others

Orchestras who expressed satisfaction with their AACs invariably felt that musician input was met with positive results. In the North Carolina Symphony, the scheduling of a particular work 50 times in a single season was an agenda item which the AAC satisfactorily resolved. Success is often achieved when the AAC meets with a music director who is attentive and willing to accept advice. Additionally, not all orchestras' AACs are without power: St. Louis Symphony's AAC may veto the selection of certain tapes for broadcasts. The Philadelphia Orchestra's AAC has found new direction and strength as a result of the artistic discussions which played a significant role in their recent contract negotiations.

Attempts to generalize about AACs within ICSOM orchestras would be difficult, given the variety of experiences with these committees. Ultimately, the personalities of the musical staff, management, and orchestra representatives and their willingness to cooperate will influence how well AACs function. But one thing seems clear: for some orchestras, AACs can serve as vehicles for the communication of musicians' thoughts and feelings about programming, conductors, audition materials, and many other artistic issues.

David Kirk  
Houston Symphony ICSOM Delegate

## Orchestra's Efforts Come Full Circle

*(Editor's Note: Recent correspondence between musicians in two of our ICSOM orchestras seems worth sharing with you. Cathy Compton, former ICSOM delegate for the Detroit Symphony, had sent a Christmas card to Charles Underwood, ICSOM delegate for the Baltimore Symphony. Cathy referred to the 1981-82 work stoppage in Baltimore, noting, "We kept your orchestra's success in mind throughout our lockout." Her card inspired Charles to write the following to his own orchestra about the effectiveness of musicians helping each other.*

Dear Colleagues,

We never requested money or letters of support from other orchestras during our 16-week lockout in 1981-82, because we wanted to wait for the exact moment when such a request would do the most good -- a moment which never came. But we were always aware, just as Detroit was, that we could count on support from our colleagues. Our having done so well with that work stoppage was something which helped Detroit musicians during their recent work stoppage, and the collective efforts of our orchestra and other orchestras to assist Detroit musicians helped them to settle with a raise of \$150 over three years instead of the 11% cut their management had proposed.

It is clear that we have gone full-circle: the success of the Detroit negotiations will now be extremely helpful to us in our negotiations this season. On the other hand, had our colleagues in Detroit permitted their management to get away with the proposed pay cut, our upcoming negotiations would be more difficult.

This is exactly what ICSOM and solidarity are all about. I do feel that it is morally appropriate that we, the performing artists who make the music, try to help each other as much as possible. But this issue is also more concrete and quantifiable a matter than just one of moral responsibility; it is the principle that the collective effort of the musicians of all orchestras to help each other ultimately results in our helping ourselves, and therefore, the entire industry. The enormous gains that many American orchestras have achieved during the past 25 years are largely due to this collective effort.

This is not to say, of course, that all attempts by orchestras to help each other will always result in the success which we in Baltimore achieved in 1982, or which Detroit achieved in 1987. But the effort must always be maintained. It's simply in the best interests of all of us.

*Charles Underwood  
Baltimore Symphony ICSOM Delegate*

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## ICSOM Treasurer Counts \$\$\$ for Local

ICSOM treasurer Florence Nelson, of the New York City Opera Orchestra, has been appointed treasurer of Local 802 in New York City. Florence assumed her Local 802 position April 11, 1988.

For years, ICSOM has encouraged musicians to become involved in the running of their locals. Congratulations to Florence.

## A Wind Concert for Life and Breath

On March 6, 1988, the wind players of the Alabama Symphony performed a benefit concert for the American Lung Association. An orchestra member first conceived the idea three years ago. The players worked with the physicians' support group of the symphony association to contact the appropriate people in the Lung Association. The players arranged all artistic matters, while the Lung Association took care of programs, publicity, and other logistical matters. All the musicians, including music director Paul Polivnick, donated their services. The Lung Association was quite pleased with the success of the concert.

The musicians were each rewarded with a tee-shirt from the Lung Association and the satisfaction of knowing that their efforts went to a good cause.

*Michael Bevers  
Alabama Symphony*

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## A Stall in Negotiations?

As negotiations get underway in many of our orchestras, committees will want to be sure to get maximum restroom benefits for musicians. Red Pastorek, a bass player in the Houston Symphony, submitted a sample restroom policy which was posted (anonymously) on his orchestra's bulletin board.

TO: All Employees  
FROM: Employee Benefits Department  
RE: Restroom Trip Policy (RTP)

In the past, employees were permitted to make trips to the restroom under informal guidelines. Effective April/01/88, a restroom trip policy (RTP) will be established to provide a consistent method of accounting for each employee's restroom time and ensuring equal treatment of all employees.

Under this policy a restroom trip bank (RTB) will be established for each employee. The first day of each month employees will be given a restroom trip credit (RTC) of 20. Restroom trip credits can be accumulated from month to month.

Currently, the entrances to all restrooms are being equipped with personnel identification stations and computer-linked voice print recognition. During the next two weeks, each employee must provide two copies of voice prints (one normal, one under stress) to personnel. The voice print recognition stations will be operational, but not restrictive for the month of April. Employees should acquaint themselves with the stations during that period.

If an employee's restroom trip bank balance reaches zero, the doors to all restrooms will not unlock for that employee's voice until the first of the month.

In addition, all restroom stalls are being equipped with timed paper roll retractors. If the stall is occupied for more than three minutes, an alarm will sound. Thirty seconds after the alarm sounds, the roll of paper in the stall will retract, the toilet will flush, and the stall door will open.

## Lessons

### ICSOM Legal Counsel Reviews Negotiations

The recent 12-week strike/lockout of the Detroit Symphony [see February *Senza*] provided a number of lessons for DSO members, and perhaps for the rest of us. From my perspective as ICSOM legal counsel and attorney at these negotiations, however, there were two matters of particular significance.

The first was something that we have talked about at ICSOM conferences, but which bears repeating in these pages.

After approximately 9-10 weeks of the work stoppage in Detroit, a third-party proposal was made to both sides that the orchestra return to work (in time, of course, for the lucrative Christmas season), and that the outstanding unresolved issues be submitted to binding arbitration. As usual, management agreed. We refused.

As great as the temptation may be to end, or even to prevent, a long and bitter work stoppage by letting someone else decide, such a course must be resisted. The long-range problems created by such a short-term solution almost always outweigh the immediate value thereof:

1. Having once agreed to arbitration, you will be pressured into agreeing to it again and again.

2. If both sides know, or think, that arbitration is the ultimate solution at the end of the process, collective bargaining becomes nothing more than a game of posturing. Neither side truly attempts to reach agreement with the other, but instead seeks to set up its position before the arbitrator. Since arbitrators are famous for "splitting the difference," it is in nobody's best interest to come too close to the other side's position.

3. Having an arbitrator decide your fate soon becomes very much like letting your management do so. Your input is reduced to "pleading your case," without a strike threat to back it up.

4. Very few arbitrators are knowledgeable enough about the symphony orchestra business to understand that an organization in debt up to its ears can nevertheless afford to grant increases in wages, benefits, etc.

The second matter may be termed the cancel the season gambit. Any management that threatens to, or even actually does, cancel the season or any portion thereof, can also uncanceled it just as easily and quickly.

In Detroit, management first threatened to, and then did, cancel the Christmas season. When we settled on December 11, only a week or so before the previously scheduled Christmas season, it was instantly uncanceled. In fact, in my experience, I have never seen a season which was "canceled" as a result of a labor dispute remain canceled once the labor dispute was resolved.

Such threats, and even cancellations actually announced, are really just foolish and desperate acts on management's part, affecting their credibility for years to come. It is just as bad as musicians' threatening to strike if management doesn't come forward with a particular offer, and then not doing it when they fail to comply. Or, worse, striking and then going back to work after a short period of time for the same offer over which the strike originally took place.

*Leonard Leibowitz*  
ICSOM Legal Counsel

## 1987-88 Calendar of Meetings

- November 16, 1987: Health Care Cost Containment Steering Committee met in Chicago with William Hembree, Director of the Health Research Institute.
- November 16, 1987: Liaison Committee (ICSOM Executive Officers and representatives of the Major Orchestra Managers Conference), Chicago.
- January 18, 1988: Health Care Cost Containment Steering Committee met with Hembree, Washington, D.C.
- February 7-8, 1988: ICSOM Governing Board, New York.
- March 10, 1988: Health Care Cost Containment Steering Committee, Hembree, and orchestra finance directors had informational meeting in New York.
- March 27-28, 1988: ICSOM Governing Board, New York.
- April 4, 1988: Structure Committee, Chicago.
- April 18, 1988: Negotiating Orchestras, Chicago.
- Summit Committee and President's Council will convene before or during the 1988 ICSOM conference.

## Senior Symphony Debuts This Month

Older musicians from all over the country will be invited to spend a week in Connecticut this month, playing together in the National Senior Symphony, founded by Victor Norman, co-founder and conductor emeritus of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra.

The Senior Symphony will begin a week of rehearsals April 17, 1988 at the Mystic Hilton. The week will be capped by a free public concert April 22, 1988, with a special invitation extended to the region's senior citizens.

Leonard Bernstein, Conductor Laureate of the New York Philharmonic, and Sir Georg Solti, Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, lead the list of honorary board of directors.

For membership application forms and further information, please contact National Senior Symphony, P.O. Box 176, Mystic, CT 06355, or call (203) 443-5883 or (203) 536-4941.

*Abe Torchinsky*  
Administrator, ICSOM Emeritus Program

Note: Under the ICSOM Emeritus program, complimentary copies of *Senza Sordino* and the ICSOM Directory are sent to retired musicians who are at least 60 years old and have played at least 10 years in ICSOM orchestras.

To register, contact Abe Torchinsky, 654 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

## Settlement Summaries

**San Francisco Ballet Orchestra:** ratified a 3-year agreement retroactive to Dec. 1, 1987. Increases in wages, guaranteed performances and dress rehearsals, rehearsal pay, rehearsal hours per season, and EMG. Annual guaranteed wage (was \$17,091) will be \$18,940—19,438—20,777. New provision for seniority pay begins in third year, with annual payments of \$250 per five-year increment of service up to \$1,000/year for 20+ years of service. Size of orchestra increases from 45 to 48 over the life of the contract. Pension (was \$1538) goes to \$1704—1749—1869. Improvements in insurance, vacation pay, sick leave, job security, and touring. Player review committee (new).

**San Francisco Symphony:** ratified a 3-year agreement January 31 following a 2-week strike. All terms are retroactive to Nov. 28, 1987. Wages (were \$915 + \$35 EMG) go to \$975 + \$45—1020 + 45—1050 + 50. Seniority changes from annual to weekly payment, begins after 5 years rather than 10, and contains rate increases for each category of service. Increases in radio broadcast fee, extra service pay, and overtime pay. Pension (was \$18,000) increases to \$22,000, with eligibility at age 62. Past retirees to receive increases in annual payment; previous amount to be divided (\$34,500) goes to \$55,000 (2 years), 60,000 (third year.) Long-term sick leave with pay (not deducted from regular sick leave) up to 26 weeks/season for tenured musicians in extraordinary circumstances, to be decided at discretion of management. Improvements in touring conditions, scheduling, orchestra input into tenure decisions. Local 6 has recently paid for the 1984 negotiations; the legal expenses for the 1988 negotiations have also been paid by Local 6, as the orchestra used Local 6 legal counsel.

**St. Louis:** 4-year agreement ratified Feb. 26, 1988, retroactive to Oct 18, 1987. Wages were \$850 + \$20 EMG + \$10 radio. EMG increases to \$40 per week for the life of the contract; radio remains \$10. Weekly wages increase starting in April 1988. Beginning with the 88-89 season, weekly wages increase every quarter of the year, reaching \$990 by the last quarter of 1991. Not including EMG or radio, annual wages (were \$44,200) will be \$44,460-46,020—48,412—50,700. Improvements for retirees include increases in retirees' health insurance and past retirees' benefits, and "master musician" plan offering retirees pay for consulting and publicity services to the symphony. Work relief clause provides 6

extra consecutive days off to musicians who are absent fewer than 16 services per season. Minor concessions in extra service pay and scheduling. Music Medicine Advisory Committee and Pension Research Committee formed.

## Floppy Contracts

An extensive data-gathering project in ICSOM is now gaining momentum. So far, the AFM wage chart and the ICSOM bulletins have been the main means of sharing information about our orchestras. We intend to expand the process by collecting all surveys undertaken by the orchestras, identifying what further information musicians would like to have, and compiling the data into a useable format.

The AFM is assisting ICSOM in making contract information more readily available. Recently, the Symphony Department designated a toll-free number (800-223-6624) for the bulletin board. Wayne King, computer specialist in the Symphony Department, is developing a program for ICSOM which will enable us to access specific parts of contracts by topics such as auditions, dismissals, etc. Obviously, the success of the project depends on the acquisition of all ICSOM orchestra contracts on disk. The AFM has offered to key in those contracts which delegates can not obtain on disk through the committee, counsel, board, or manage-

**Editor's Note: In every ICSOM Orchestra, we need at least one person who has a modem and belongs to the ICSOM Computer Club. To join the club, ask your delegate for a sign-up form.**

ment. Ultimately, we hope musicians will have instant access, free of charge, to a potential 128 contract topics.

Of course, this foray into the twenty-first century will work only to the extent that delegates provide data and communicate what, besides contracts, they would like to have in the information bank. Delegates who haven't already done so are urged to send their orchestra's floppy disk (in an IBM format) immediately to Wayne King. An index of all material compiled so far will be distributed at the 1988 ICSOM conference in Buffalo.

*Richard Decker*  
*Syracuse Symphony ICSOM Delegate*  
*Member-at-Large, ICSOM Governing Board*

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