

# Senza Sordino

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## Players' Conferences Join Forces IN SEARCH OF A REAL FIX

In the wake of a failed effort to restructure the AFM at the 1997 AFM Convention, the working musicians of the AFM faced an untenable situation. Already paying more than their fair share of the union's bills at both the local and national levels and getting less than they pay for in service, working musicians saw themselves faring even worse as a result of the AFM budget cut that was adopted by the 1997 AFM Convention. They asked, "Who will be able to really fix the trouble with the AFM, and when?" The answer, they have decided, is themselves, and now.



*Keynote Speaker I. Philip Sipser, ICSOM's first legal counsel, receives a plaque from ICSOM Chair Robert Levine commemorating his years of devotion and service to ICSOM and orchestra musicians.*

In a dramatic display of unity among working musicians, all four players' conferences — ICSOM, OCSM (the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians), ROPA (the Regional Orchestra Players' Association), and RMA (Recording Musicians Association) — at their respective summer gatherings passed corresponding legislation to establish an unprecedented cooperative and collaborative relationship among them. Working together, the four conferences will form a joint committee (Investigative Task Force) to investigate the AFM and its problems, and in August 1998 will produce the first-ever joint meeting of the four players' conferences. At that Unity Conference virtually every AFM symphonic and recording musician in the United States and Canada will be represented — the largest convergence of working AFM musicians in history.

The keystone of the players' conference collaboration was put into place at the 1997 ICSOM Conference, held August 20-23 in Vail, Colorado. Discussion of AFM restructure was the major item on the agenda. A panel moderated by Richard Totusek, Treasurer of Local 47 (Los Angeles), and consisting of Dennis Dreith, President of RMA; Andrew Brandt, President of ROPA; Robert Levine, Chair of ICSOM; William Moriarity, President of Local 802, New York City; Kenneth Shirk, member of the AFM International Executive Board (IEB); and Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM Counsel, presented their ideas and opinions about the nature of the AFM's problems and the possible solutions, followed by discussion from the floor.

The floor discussion of AFM restructure was a recitation of the many questions left unanswered by the AFM Convention and the previous restructure attempt. These questions and comments from ICSOM Conference participants give some idea of the formidable challenge the joint players' conference Investigative Task Force has before it:

- How would we structure the AFM if we started over from scratch?
- What is the definition of a union?
- Is member service a Federation or local responsibility?
- What intrinsic problems in the nature of our profession must be considered in any restructure?
- Is this just a matter of generating more money, or a matter of restructure?
- Working musicians are outnumbered by nonworking AFM members who may disagree with our definition of a union.

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- The problem is not enough members.
- The problem is the locals.
- The problem is the antiunion climate among musicians and in society.
- We need more than money; we need a more efficient way to deliver services.
- Would the AFM be better off with a smaller, more exclusive membership of full-time musicians, or with a larger, more inclusive membership?
- Symphony, recording, and club-date musicians need different services; the AFM cannot be a one-size-fits-all union any longer.
- Can we have different classes of membership with different dues and service structures?
- Money in the music industry is in rock & roll. We milk symphony musicians while rock & rollers are untouched.
- Who does the IEB represent?



*Frederick Zenone, a cellist in the National Symphony and ICSOM Chair from 1980 to 1986, reported on the activities of the Symphony Orchestra Institute. (photo by Mark Schubert)*

ICSOM Chair Robert Levine described the AFM as a Rube Goldberg-esque creation: “The AFM’s approach to problems has always been crash, burn, short-term fix. The Orchestra Service Program (OSP) is a bandaid. The Regional Orchestra Emergency Relief Fund is a bandaid. The recently enacted IEB Oversight Committee is a bandaid. We have layer upon layer of bandaids. Instead of patching over problems, let’s fix the fundamentals.”

AFM President Steve Young pointed out from the floor that any new plan agreed upon by the players’ conferences and the AFM leadership would have to be approved by the delegates at the 1999 AFM Convention. He urged all musicians to lobby aggressively at the local level to elect and educate delegates to the 1999 AFM

Convention who would champion our reforms and vote to further them.

In his annual address to the ICSOM Conference, Young stated that the AFM has no money in the bank and no financial reserves. He also described pressing problems that the Federation must address — emerging technologies like digital movies and the Internet, organizing, and legislative lobbying — in the face of budget cuts mandated by the 1997 AFM Convention. President Young said, “I want to build a better union for working musicians,” and while no one doubted his sincerity, he did not explain how the AFM’s increasing new problems, as well as the old ones, could be addressed with even less revenue while, at the same time, maintaining necessary services to working musicians.

All during the ICSOM Conference, ICSOM made available for sale two books, *Music Matters*, a history of the AFM, and *For The Record*, a history of the AFM recording musicians, with the proceeds of the sale going to support TEMPO, the AFM’s political action committee. \$650 had been raised for TEMPO by the end of the conference.

The keynote speaker of the 1997 ICSOM Conference was I. Philip Sipser, former counsel of ICSOM and legendary negotiator for orchestras. Sipser’s address retraced the history of ICSOM from an officially maligned union democracy guerilla movement to a respected force with official conference standing within the AFM. He warned about the latest management strategies to manipulate money and the media to create false perceptions of orchestra finances and musicians’ needs. He urged ICSOM to hire a public relations specialist to counter the misleading images of musicians that managements have promulgated in the press. Sipser also urged musicians to become voting members of their orchestra organizations and apply pressure on boards from corporate membership positions as well as at the bargaining table.

Two related panel discussions, on 1996-97 striking orchestras (Oregon, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta, Philadelphia) and on early settlements and other strike alternatives, revealed some interesting parallels. Whether in war or peace, negotiation success depends on an absolutely unified orchestra, speaking with one voice through its duly elected orchestra committee. Threats to orchestra solidarity come from all sides — from management, board, community, and most painfully, from dissidents within the orchestra. An orchestra’s resilience to the rigors of a strike is predicted not so much by the strength of a strike vote, but by the willingness of musicians to do the work of a strike, such as serving on strike committees, and by the depth of their understanding of the issues central to the strike.

Several striking orchestras admitted having inadequately educated and prepared their musicians for a strike, inadequately developed their strike strategy, and inadequately researched their orchestra’s financial and labor histories. As a result, some striking musicians held unrealistic expectations and became disgruntled when their strikes did not quickly end. In some cases, this growing disunity in the ranks threatened the outcome of the strike.

The orchestras describing early settlements (St. Paul, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, New Jersey, Louisville, Milwaukee, and San Antonio) were not necessarily better off

**Re-elected**

at the 1997 ICSOM Conference to new two-year terms as ICSOM Members-at-Large were **Mary Plaine** (Baltimore Symphony), **Charles Schlueter** (Boston Symphony), **James Clute** (Minnesota Orchestra), and **Michael Moore** (Atlanta Symphony).

financially than those who struck; in fact, some were worse off. What they did have, however, that the strikers did not was a constructive, productive dialogue with their managements and boards that fostered open, honest communication and complete disclosure of all relevant facts about the institution. In several cases, that improved relationship came as a direct result of a previous painful labor dispute. Panelists agreed that there must be a willingness by all parties to be reasonable, to look at the big picture for the good of the organization as a whole, and to seek creative solutions, including those that come from musicians.

Trust was repeatedly cited by panelists as the key to success. Where it exists, strikes can be avoided. Such trust seems to be possible only where managers and boards are perceived to be competent, diligent, and genuinely respectful of professional musicians. Trust is sustained by management's keeping its word, making good on its promises and proving that the musicians' confidence was well placed. In several orchestras, musicians have effectively persuaded the organization's leaders to make changes in board and management personnel as necessary to clear the way for the development of such improved labor relations.

The participants stressed that, even in amicable negotiations, the hard work is never finished. Honest communication and trust are good for starters, but they must be followed up with ongoing vigilance. Complacency is a constant danger for both management and musicians, and sometimes maintaining good labor relations is harder than establishing it in the first place.

Informative and at times entertaining workshops were presented on "Shop Stewards" and "Sexual Harassment" by ICSOM Counsel Leonard Leibowitz and AFM Symphonic Services Division Director Florence Nelson. The final speaker of the 1997 ICSOM Conference was Frederick Zenone, ICSOM Chair from 1980 to 1986, who updated us on the efforts of the Symphony Orchestra Institute to effect change in orchestral organizations. Fred's moving tribute and expression of personal indebtedness to keynote speaker Phil Sipser brought the conference full-circle to a fitting close.

Not only the ICSOM Conference, but also ICSOM itself, has come full-circle. ICSOM began 35 years ago as a dissident movement within the AFM with the goal of improving the union's service to working musicians. This summer, together with her sister conferences, ICSOM has once again taken on the mantle of responsibility for changing the AFM. Local 802 President Bill Moriarity told the conference, "Power for a local comes from its working musicians." It seems that the time has come for the working musicians of the AFM to exercise that power and take control of their union. The stage has been set for the historic Unity Conference, scheduled for August 1998. Stay tuned.

**Strike Averted at Chicago Lyric Opera**

After more than seven months of negotiations and a four-day work stoppage that threatened opening night, a settlement was reached covering the orchestra at Lyric Opera of Chicago for the next three years.

Lyric management presented its "final offer" to the Orchestra Committee on September 4, five days before the first rehearsal for the season. At a meeting on Monday, September 8 (the first day of scheduled rehearsals), the orchestra followed the committee's recommendation and voted overwhelmingly to support the committee and to reject Lyric's offer, despite several letters from Lyric management and the board president and an intense media campaign which threatened cancellation of productions and perhaps the whole season.

The federal mediator called the parties back together September 10, and following a 14-hour bargaining session, agreement was reached on a three-year contract that improved Lyric's previous offer by nearly \$500,000 and brought significant improvements in a number of areas. The orchestra's solidarity and the wonderful relationship of the committee, Local 10-208, headed by President Ed Ward, and counsel Mike Greenfield proved invaluable in reaching this agreement, which represents a 26.1% increase over the three years.

*Settlement Summary*

(1996-97) 1997-98 1998-99 1999-00

Weeks:	24	24	24	25
Weekly wage:	\$1475	\$1540	\$1615	\$1675
Prin Overscale:	25%	25%	27%	30%
Asst Prin Overscale:	8%	8%	9%	10%
Doubling:	25%	25%	27%	30%
Pension:	9%	9%	9%	10%
Seniority (over 25 yrs):	4%	4%	5.5%	7%

*James T. Berkenstock  
Orchestra Committee Chair, Lyric Opera of Chicago*

**Your Dues Dollars At Work:**

*ICSOM Conference Coordinator Tom Hall (Chicago Symphony) fills the mailboxes of conference participants . . .*



# Voicings

**On June 16, 1997, I tripped over a crack in the sidewalk while on my afternoon jog.** I fell hard on the cement, but I picked myself right up and started to walk it off. It wasn't until I got to the end of the block that I realized I couldn't open or close my right hand.

I had broken my wrist, exactly two days before the start of the Grant Park season. That night, I called the personnel manager, Ted Kaitchuk. I told him the situation, accepted his sincere, and horrified, sympathies, and asked about disability. When he told me that the Grant Park Symphony had no disability plan beyond my week's worth of sick days, I realized that this would be much more than just an inconvenience.

I had just moved to Chicago, having taken a leave of absence from my position in Memphis. I had been counting on the summer's income to get me through what I knew would be a slow first couple of months. Now I was faced with the prospect of no income whatsoever, and, with a useless right arm, no way of getting any income. I visited the unemployment office, looked into part-time work, and examined all the alternatives I could, but it was looking like I would be living courtesy of my VISA charge card for quite awhile.

The Grant Park Symphony was under no obligation to do anything for me. In fact, since I was technically refusing work which was being offered to me, I could have been, under a strict reading of the contract, terminated. Fortunately, no one in management even considered doing this. In fact, the management met immediately with the orchestra committee to find a way to help me out. What they came up with was, I believe, extraordinary.

The General Director, James Palermo, proposed a system whereby the other members of the orchestra could voluntarily donate sick days to me. (In Grant Park, personal leave is capped, but sick leave can accumulate indefinitely). I would thus be paid for whatever services were covered by these sick days gifted to me, until either they ran out or I recovered well enough to come back to work. The orchestra committee, chaired by Michael Shelton, enthusiastically accepted this proposal.

**On behalf of the musicians of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra,** I would like to thank the orchestras of ICSOM for accepting the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra into its membership. It couldn't have happened at a more appropriate time. We are currently in the midst of a search for Music Director and also Executive Director. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have the resources of ICSOM available to us. It is also a year in which we will be negotiating a new master agreement. We are looking forward to doing our share as a member of ICSOM's team of orchestras.

*Karl Pituch  
Chairman, Orchestra Committee  
Jacksonville Symphony*

I was amazed. I had witnessed so many instances in other orchestras where management and the players would inflexibly hold to their reading of the contract, and common sense would fall victim. Here was the opposite: orchestra members helping one of their own, management making it possible.

The response from the orchestra was overwhelming. Many musicians donated their sick days, and many more told me they would do so if I needed them. Ted, in particular, offered to give me as many sick days as I needed. (Like Cal Ripken, Ted has never missed a day's work). By the end of the first week, I had enough sick leave to last the entire ten-week season. I tried to thank the orchestra as best as I could, by bringing food to the orchestra breaks, helping out a little in the office, and coaching the softball team (one-handed!), but I knew that nothing I could do would be thanks enough. Luckily, I was able to return for the final three weeks of the season.

I felt, and still feel, privileged to call these people my colleagues. I will never forget their generosity.

*Kevin Case  
Grant Park Symphony  
Memphis Symphony*

**I just attended the 1997 ICSOM Conference.** The Conference provided training that would be a valuable resource if I were ever to serve on a negotiating committee.

Unfortunately it seems that there are too few members of ICSOM orchestras at these conferences. Most orchestras only send one person to the conference. Urge your union to follow the example of Local #3 [Indianapolis], which pays for the ICSOM delegate and an observer to attend the yearly conference.

Too many orchestras are electing the same delegate for many years, some for as many as 10 or 20 years. Orchestra members should consider the benefits of electing a new delegate, if their delegate has served for several consecutive years. Delegates who have served for many years should decline nominations for at least a year or two.

For ICSOM as a whole, electing the same delegates year after year deprives ICSOM of the broader base of talent and experience that a larger pool of delegates would provide. For each ICSOM orchestra, this practice deprives that orchestra of the broader power base it could and should have if more members benefited from the valuable training that the ICSOM conferences provide.

*Michael Hartt  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra*

The editor replies: *In ICSOM, as in any representative body, there are both advantages and disadvantages to long tenures by delegates. Each orchestra should weigh all factors in electing its ICSOM delegate. It is not necessary to be a delegate, though, to attend an ICSOM conference, as Mr. Hartt's attendance confirms. It is ICSOM's policy to welcome any and all members of ICSOM orchestras to the conference who wish to attend as preregistered observers. At this year's conference, five musicians from the Louisville Orchestra, in addition to the delegate, attended.*

## Houston Musicians Battle Downsizing, Sign One-Year Contract

On September 19, the musicians of the Houston Symphony accepted a one-year contract restoring salary cuts. Announcement of the new agreement came a scant 11 hours before the first strike in the orchestra's 84-year history.

The musicians played without a contract for almost four months. On July 13, the Houston Symphony Society declared a negotiation impasse, imposing the terms of its "last, best and final offer," including an 8.7% salary reduction, a plan to reduce the size of the orchestra through attrition, and a byzantine "vacation accrual" method leaving players with slim paychecks during the July/August vacation period. The musicians filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board against the Symphony Society, and mobilized a public information campaign resulting in generally favorable publicity supporting the high level of the orchestra's artistic achievements.

Back at the bargaining table, the Society's representatives did not share the public's advocacy of a progressive settlement. As the orchestra reassembled following vacation, our negotiating committee investigated every avenue for peacefully resolving the dispute. The Louisville Orchestra's successes with the oversight process of Chicago Symphony President Henry Fogel were noted, and Fogel agreed to come to Houston to mediate.

Fogel's first trip to Houston, shortened by news of the death of Sir Georg Solti, involved meetings with both sides' bargaining representatives and contacts with Mrs. Elyse Lanier (wife of Houston Mayor Bob Lanier) and local philanthropist M.S. "Mike" Stude. Lanier and Stude ultimately led a small coalition providing \$490,000 to fund reinstatement of the musicians' salaries and benefits.

The one-year agreement extends most terms of last year's contract; a minimum salary of \$62,400 (including EMG), and a minimum strength of 97 players. In a new development, the orchestra will enter the AFM-EPF pension, with transition issues for near-retirees under the existing defined-benefit plan yet to be worked out. The musicians of the Houston Symphony wish to thank Mr. Philip Sipser for his legal representation, and we are especially grateful for the invaluable assistance of AFM Local 65-699.

The "Fogel Process" will continue throughout the season, with task forces comprised of staff, board, and musicians reviewing the performance and efficiency of marketing, public relations, board effectiveness, etc. Within the orchestra, many are relieved that a strike has averted, but there exists an uneasy feeling that a battle may have been delayed rather than avoided.

The challenges of this difficult period in Houston have clear significance for every ICSOM member. In recognition of this, we plan on providing a future report detailing a new era of organizational leadership reflective of the Houston Symphony musicians' continued dedication to artistic quality.

*Fred Edelen  
Houston Symphony ICSOM delegate*

## 1997 ICSOM Conference Resolutions

*Whereas*, Abe Torchinsky encouraged ICSOM to initiate a program to provide services to retired members of ICSOM orchestras, including sending them *Senza Sordino* and the ICSOM Directory; and

*Whereas*, Abe Torchinsky has served as the administrator of the ICSOM Emeritus Program since its inception in the early 1980's; and

*Whereas*, Abe Torchinsky is unable to attend the annual ICSOM Conference for the first time in many years; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the ICSOM Governing Board and the delegates to the 1997 ICSOM Conference express their profound gratitude to Abe Torchinsky for his service as founder and administrator of the ICSOM Emeritus Program and for the service this has provided to retired orchestra musicians; and, be it further

**Resolved**, That the ICSOM Governing Board and the delegates to the 1997 ICSOM Conference express their deep regret that Abe Torchinsky cannot be with them at the 1997 ICSOM Conference and extend him their warmest regards and best wishes.



*Whereas*, The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians has long respected and admired the hard work, dedication and leadership of Evelyne Robitaille; and

*Whereas*, She has faithfully served the Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) as President for eight years; and

*Whereas*, She has been a key representative and spokesperson on an international level for symphonic musicians in Canada and the United States; and

*Whereas*, She has always been willing and able to speak truth to power; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the Officers and Delegates of ICSOM hereby express their profound gratitude and admiration to Evelyne Robitaille for her dedication, humor, and devotion to furthering the goals and interests of symphony musicians worldwide, and extend their best wishes to her in all her future pursuits.



*Whereas*, The budget of the Symphonic Services Division (SSD) has decreased significantly since 1995 while symphonic work dues steadily increased; and

*Whereas*, The need for services to symphonic musicians is greater than ever; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That ICSOM urge the AFM International Executive Board (IEB) to increase the staffing and funding levels of the Symphonic Services Division so that those levels support the 1994 staffing and funding levels for the New York office of the Symphonic Services Division, and at least maintain, as a minimum, the current level of staffing and funding for Symphonic Services Division, Canada.



*Whereas*, Orchestra managements often view an orchestra librarian as just another clerical employee, hired for low wages and poor benefits and without consideration for his/her training and experience; and

*Whereas*, Orchestra librarians are an integral part of any symphonic orchestra and are professional musicians; and

*Whereas*, Orchestra librarians must have special skills to successfully service the needs of performing musicians; and

*Whereas*, It is in the best interests of these performing musicians to have representation in the hiring and dismissal procedures of its orchestra librarians; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the delegates to the 1997 ICSOM Conference encourage member orchestras to seek the inclusion of all orchestra librarians in their collective bargaining units.



*(continued on next page)*

*... confers with ICSOM President  
Dave Angus ...*



(continued from page 5)

*Whereas*, Most of the recommendations of the AFM's Restructure Committee were not adopted by the 1997 AFM Convention; and

*Whereas*, The problems of the AFM are profound and could threaten its very existence; and

*Whereas*, The AFM must address its problems with modern tools and techniques within the principles of solidarity and union democracy; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That ICSOM join with the other Player Conferences in forming and funding an Investigative Task Force to study ways to enhance the AFM's services, efficiency and resources so that the AFM can better serve professional musicians.



*Whereas*, The 92nd Convention of the American Federation of Musicians amended Article 20, Section 13, of the Federation Bylaws to add a third player Trustee to the American Federation of Musicians Symphony-Opera Orchestra Strike Fund; and

*Whereas*; The amended Article 20, Section 13, provides that ICSOM select two Trustees to the American Federation of Musicians Symphony-Opera Orchestra Strike Fund; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the ICSOM Governing Board be authorized to select those two trustees.



*Whereas*, Symphonic musicians are all too often faced with demands for concessions or threats of bankruptcy; and

*Whereas*, Financial information, and impartial professional analysis of that information, is critical to successful bargaining; and

*Whereas*, An increasing number of musicians are serving on management boards and committees, in which capacities they need information and assistance, therefore; be it

**Resolved**, That ICSOM urge the IEB — in consultation with the SSD and its Steering Committee — to fund the development and maintenance of a database of current and past financial information, together with professional analysis of that information, for all symphonic institutions that employ AFM members; and, be it further

**Resolved**, That this project employ the services of Ronald J. Bauers, recognized as the preeminent expert on American and Canadian orchestra finances, working in conjunction with a Canadian chartered accountant; and, be it further

**Resolved**, That the AFM continue funding financial analyses of orchestras during the development of this database.



*Whereas*, The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, at great cost to themselves, won a tremendous victory for the entire American labor movement in their recent struggle with United Parcel Service; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians extend its congratulations to the rank-and-file membership and the locals of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and to its president, Ron Carey.



*Dale Gosa is the delegate from ICSOM's newest member orchestra, the Jacksonville Symphony. Jacksonville was unanimously elected to ICSOM membership at this year's Conference.*

*Whereas*, The present scheduling of Player Conferences annual meetings at different time and locations is an impediment to effective interaction among the Player Conferences; and

*Whereas*, The 1997 AFM Convention resulted in an unprecedented unity among the Player Conferences, and

*Whereas*, It is crucial to build on that unity for the 1999 AFM Convention and for the future; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That ICSOM, in conjunction with OCSM, ROPA, and the RMA, create a Unity Conference for the summer of 1998, at a time and place to be mutually decided, in lieu of the present separate meetings.



*Whereas*, The delegates to the 1995 ICSOM Conference passed a resolution encouraging all ICSOM orchestras to provide domestic partner benefits and urged the Symphonic Services Division to make available to orchestras appropriate contract language and documentation; and

*Whereas*, Many member orchestras have successfully negotiated domestic partner benefits into their collective bargaining agreements, thereby reducing the disparity of employers' benefits packages to their constituent musicians; and

*Whereas*, A comparable disparity still exists within AFM-Employers Pension Fund benefit plans; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the delegates to the 1997 ICSOM Conference urge the trustees of the AFM-Employers Pension Fund to allow the participants the option of choosing joint survivor (husband/wife) benefits for their surviving domestic partners.



*Whereas*, Conductor Neeme Järvi displayed unusual courage in contributing his services to the striking musicians of the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducting a concert for "One Maestro, Two Orchestras," and

*Whereas*, Neeme Järvi undertook this engagement despite recommendations by leading managers of American symphony orchestras that he not do so; and

*Whereas*, Neeme Järvi generously donated his fee for this concert to the strike fund of the musicians of the Philadelphia Orchestra; and

*Whereas*, The performance under his direction was remarkable for its artistic excellence, with only a single rehearsal in preparation; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the delegates to the 1997 ICSOM Conference express their most profound gratitude and admiration to Maestro Neeme Järvi for his recognition that, in the end, orchestra musicians and conductors stand on the same side.



*Whereas*, The toll-free telephone line of the American Federation of Musicians is a valuable service to AFM members; and

*Whereas*, Elimination of the toll-free telephone line would serve as a disincentive for rank-and-file AFM members to ask their union for help with their legitimate trade union needs; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians urge the International Executive Board of the American Federation of Musicians to retain the AFM's toll-free telephone line.

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**THE 1997 ICSOM GOVERNING BOARD** (L to R): **Charles Schlueter** (Boston Symphony), Member-at-Large; **Marsha Schweitzer** (Honolulu Symphony), Editor, Senza Sordino; **Lucinda-Lewis** (New Jersey Symphony), Secretary; **Mary Plaine** (Baltimore Symphony), Member-at-Large; **Leonard Leibowitz**, Counsel; **Robert Levine** (Milwaukee Symphony), Chair; **James Clute** (Minnesota Orchestra), Member-at-Large; **David Angus** (Rochester Philharmonic), President; **Stephanie Tretick** (Pittsburgh Symphony), Treasurer; and **Michael Moore** (Atlanta Symphony), Member-at-Large. [photo by Mark Schubert]



*Toward UNITY 1998:*

**PCC Forms ITF, Meets IEB**

The elected leaders of the four player conferences of the AFM, constituting the Players Conference Council (PCC), met with the newly-elected International Executive Board (IEB) of the AFM on September 21 in New York City. It was a meeting quite unlike that envisioned in the 1990 Roehl Report, in which such meetings were formalized, and which stated that “the purpose of the meetings shall be to exchange information and ideas on appropriate subjects regarding the good and welfare of the American Federation of Musicians.”

The members of the Players Conference Council (Andrew Brandt from ROPA, Dennis Dreith from RMA, Robert Levine from ICSOM, and Beverly Spotton from OCSM) presented the parallel resolutions that had been passed by the four player conferences, as well as a handful of conference-specific issues. The response from the IEB to the requests from the four player conferences was as if a vow of silence had been added to the oath of office. But the silence — total and deafening — spoke volumes.

The members of the PCC also updated the IEB on the activities of the Investigative Task Force (ITF), set up by the four player conferences at their respective annual conferences, and invited the IEB to talk to the Task Force and to make AFM staff available to talk to the Task Force as well. The response, at least so far, has been — silence.

Why is the leadership of our union so reluctant to engage in an open dialog with the elected representatives of those AFM members who carry most of the financial burden of funding this union?

On a more positive note, before the meeting with the IEB, the members of the PCC met with the other members of the Investigative Task Force—Bill Moriarity, President of Local 802, and Richard Totusek, Treasurer of Local 47—and held a very productive discussion about the group’s methodology, membership and timetable.

*Robert Levine  
ICSOM Chair*

*. . . and then gets down to the really important business of the Conference!*



To  
I. PHILIP SIPSER  
In Appreciation of  
and Gratitude for  
His Countless Contributions to  
Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Orchestra Musicians  
Throughout the Country  
Over the Course of Thirty Years  
of Representation

\* \* \*

Presented by the  
International  
Conference of  
Symphony and  
Opera  
Musicians

1997

*Presented to I. Philip Sipser at the 1997 ICSOM Conference  
Vail, Colorado, August 23, 1997*

*(Conference Resolutions, continued from page 6)*



*Whereas*, The management of the Puerto Rico Symphony has chosen to lock out the musicians of the Orchestra rather than engage in serious labor negotiations; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the Governing Board and delegates to the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians pledge their support to the musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony, Local 555, American Federation of Musicians, in their efforts to win a fair and just collective bargaining agreement and to return to performing for the citizens of Puerto Rico.



*Whereas*, The musicians of the Houston Symphony have been playing without a contract since June 1, 1997; and

*Whereas*, The Houston Symphony Society has illegally implemented a unilateral wage cut and hiring freeze; and

*Whereas*, The Society, through its actions, has shown it has no intention of bargaining in good faith but instead threatens to undermine the artistic achievements of the Houston Symphony of the past decade; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the Governing Board and delegates to the 1997 International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians call upon the Houston Symphony Society to desist this destructive and unnecessary course of action; and, be it further

**Resolved**, That the Society offer the Houston Symphony musicians a decent, fair, and competitive contract which will ensure the continued artistic growth of the Houston Symphony.



*Whereas*, It has been recognized that rock-and-roll, jazz, R&B, and alternative music musicians have not been effectively organized; and

*Whereas*, All musicians, including symphony musicians, should be concerned with the well-being and effective representation of rock-and-roll, jazz, R&B, and alternative music musicians by the American Federation of Musicians; and

*Whereas*, A most significant portion of potential revenue is being lost to the union by not organizing these groups of musicians; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, That the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians recommend to the International Executive Board of the American Federation of Musicians that a task force be created to report on ways of effectively organizing these groups of musicians.



## Newslets

**The Pittsburgh Symphony's Tiny Tots and Fiddlesticks Concerts** were profiled in the August 1997 issue of *Chamber Music* magazine. In an article entitled "Little Ears: Early Childhood and the Next Musical Frontier," authors James Houlik and Terese Kaptur wrote, "The Fiddlesticks Concerts are intended for four- to ten-year-olds and are presided over by a mascot named Fiddlesticks. Prior to a forty-five-minute concert, the children visit each of six rooms for an eight-minute kinesthetic interactive experience featuring members of the instrumental families. Basic concepts and materials for the concerts are developed by a committee of teachers representing twenty-five schools, the conductors, and the staff."

The article documents the value of music in early childhood development, even prenatal development, and describes several projects underway around the country to bring music into young lives. The authors point out that early music education is a rapidly evolving field, warning us that "involving live music in education and health delivery systems will require musicians to assume roles that will challenge preconceptions about professional life."



Peter K. Gregersen, M.D., chief of the Division of Biology and Human Genetics at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, New York, is working to find **genes that bestow perfect pitch**. "Of the 126 people that we studied who have perfect pitch, 26% said they have siblings with the skill. Musicians without perfect pitch reported only 1.3% of siblings with the ability," he explains. "This strongly indicates a genetic basis for perfect pitch. Identifying genes for perfect pitch could help us understand genetic control of cognition in general, and help shed light on conditions

such as autism, which is occasionally accompanied by perfect pitch ability." If you have perfect pitch and would like to participate in the study, contact Dr. Gregersen at North Shore University Hospital toll-free at 1-888-897-3098.

*Unless otherwise noted, photos in this issue are by Marsha Schweitzer.*

Due to late-breaking developments, **Part III of "Rhapsody In Bluegrass,"** our continuing saga about the Louisville Orchestra, will be postponed until the next issue of *Senza Sordino*.



(photo of "Senza & Sieglinde" by Stephanie Tretick)

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