

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 37, NO. 2

On-line Edition

April 1999

Domestic Partner Benefits In Orchestras Survey Reveals Positive Trend

In December, Michael Borschel, a third-year evening division law student at Indiana University School of Law—Indianapolis and ICSOM Delegate of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, compiled and edited a survey of North American symphony, opera and ballet orchestras regarding benefits extended to domestic partners of musicians through collective bargaining agreements. The survey demonstrates that at least seventeen of the country's forty-five leading orchestras are offering some form of health and/or pension benefits to their employees' domestic partner. For the purposes of the survey, "domestic partner" includes both same-sex and unmarried heterosexual partners.

The seventeen major orchestras offering such benefits are: the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, San Francisco Opera Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

Nearly all the orchestras offering domestic partner benefits require an affidavit of some kind. Usually this requires the partners to swear under oath that they are:

- mentally competent;
- at least eighteen years of age;
- not related by blood;
- not married to anyone else;
- residing together;
- in a committed and mutually exclusive relationship; and,
- jointly responsible for the welfare and financial obligations of one another.

Such criteria form what is termed a "functional equivalent test" to discern the committed and enduring nature of the domestic partnership. The functional equivalent was articulated in a watershed decision, *Braschi v. Stahl Associates*, 543 N.E.2d 49, by the New York Court of Appeals (the state's highest appellate court) authored by J. Bellacosa in 1989.

Of the orchestras offering health benefits, several have opted to pay cash stipends or reimbursements to the employee for the purchase of private health insurance in lieu of directly enrolling the domestic partner in the bargaining unit's health plan. Either form of benefit is currently considered a taxable benefit to the employee, unless the domestic partner is the employee's legal dependent according to the Internal Revenue Code Section 152. (See Internal Revenue Code Sections 104 (a)(3), 105, 106 and 152; see also Internal Revenue Letter Rulings LTR 903408 to the city of Seattle and LTR 9109060 to the county of Santa Cruz.)

Borschel concluded, "As the technology sector has shown, the marketplace rewards employers that adapt to change and prize dedicated, creative workers, including those in nontraditional relationships. Lacking a government mandate, collective bargaining is a vigorous and efficient way to implement such change contractually. Consequently, major symphony orchestras are recognizing that it is good business to hire and retain workers who may be in non-traditional relationships by extending health, pension and other equivalent benefits to domestic partners."

A complete copy of the survey results in html, MS Word, or WordPerfect binary file format can be obtained upon request by contacting Michael Borschel at borschel@midlink.com or at:

Michael Borschel
1144 W. 73rd Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46260-4045
317-259-8066



Clute Bows Out
(story on page 2)

In This Issue

Domestic Partner Benefits	1
ICSOM Board De-Bassed!	2
ShuffleBoard—AFM Style	3
ICSOM Directory Updates	3
1998-99 Wage Chart	4
Voicings	6
Tour de Farce	8

ICSOM Board De-Bassed!

James Clute, a musician of the bassist kind in the Minnesota Orchestra and ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large, has decided to leave the ICSOM Board to pursue personal interests. Jim was the Governing Board member with the longest tenure of any current member, and his career as an activist goes back to the earliest days of ICSOM—he was listed as a member of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra Committee in the second issue (March 1963) of *Senza Sordino*.



“There is no one I would rather have guarding my back in a political knife-fight than Jim Clute. We will miss his wisdom, his humor, and his toughness.”

Robert Levine, ICSOM Chair

“Jim Clute remembers the days when there were no orchestras with 52-week seasons in the United States. He lived through a time when most orchestra musicians had no job security, no pension, no protection from the whims of tyrannical conductors and managers. He understands better than most the importance of ICSOM and the Union. I pledge to you, Jim, that I will work to help the next generation understand and preserve what you fought for and won for us.”

Marsha Schweitzer, Editor, *Senza Sordino*

“I’m one of many ICSOM board members who came onto the governing board during Jim Clute’s tenure. Like the rest, I am a better unionist and a better person for having served with him. I’m only sorry he stepped



Clute, as always, is the center of attention at the 1998 winter meeting of the ICSOM Governing Board. (Mary Plaine, Charlie Schlueter, Florence Nelson and Tom Hall look on.)

down before he had the chance to tell me the secret of perpetually being 39.”

Lucinda-Lewis,
ICSOM Secretary

“I think we should finally reveal what many have suspected for a long time: Jim is really 40.”

Lucinda-Lewis,
ICSOM Secretary

“Jim Clute is a voice of reason about our movement. He seemed to have a down-to-earth look at issues. To me, he was a man with visions about the orchestra world. I think his approach to issues would turn some off, but his manner and thinking went right along with how I feel on the issues. I will miss him at the ICSOM conferences. I hope he will come and visit us from time to time.”

Nancy Stutsman
ICSOM Delegate
Kennedy Center Orchestra



James Clute has been with the Minnesota Orchestra for 39 years and has served on representative committees since 1961, including eight negotiating teams. Jim was a delegate at two of the founding meetings of ICSOM and has been a Governing Board Member-at-Large for the past ten years.



“My strongest impression of Jim is how quiet he could be. Sometimes I would wonder if he had fallen asleep. And then he would rise and address the question on the floor and bring to it all the history and experience he had within him, which is quite a lot. I think ICSOM will be a great deal poorer for not having his memory always at our disposal.”

Mary Carroll Plaine
ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large



William Buchman, a member of the Chicago Symphony, has accepted the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Governing Board to serve the remainder of Jim’s term. Bill is familiar to us as the administrator of the ICSOM Conductor Evaluation Program.

[Editor’s note: The ICSOM Governing Board now has two violas, two horns, two bassoons . . . I feel a weird little midrange sextet coming on . . . with trumpet obligato and tuba ostinato . . . Mary, you’ll get the parts together, right? . . .]



Clute confers with 1998 ICSOM/Unity Conference guest speaker Martin Foster.

Updates and Corrections to the ICSOM Directory

Email addresses:

in the listings of:

<i>Florida Orchestra (page 20):</i>	Fusco, Anthony	Heartlites@aol.com
<i>Honolulu Symphony (page 25):</i>	Schweitzer, Marsha	MSchwitzr@aol.com
<i>San Diego Symphony (page 61):</i>	Levine, Richard	rlevine@electriciti.com

Street addresses:

in the listings of:

*San Francisco Ballet (page 62), San Francisco Opera (page 63),
and San Francisco Symphony (page 64):*

Musicians Union, Local 6
116 Ninth Street
San Francisco CA 94103
415-575-0777 (Voice) 415-863-6173 (FAX)



For the first time this year, advertising was sold in the ICSOM Directory. In accepting advertising for the Directory, the ICSOM Governing Board decided to limit advertisers to those offering products and services directly related to the work of orchestra musicians. In keeping with our members' right to privacy, neither the Directory nor any ICSOM mailing lists were provided to the advertisers. ICSOM wishes to thank our Directory advertisers, and ICSOM musicians are encouraged to patronize them whenever possible.

Emeritus:

Add:

Detroit Symphony (page 72-73):

Charles F. Weaver
20193 Briarcliff Road
Detroit MI 48221
313-864-0523
cweav@mich.com

NYC Opera Orchestra (page 74):

Sam Gurkin
3 Stuyvesant Oval #11-D
New York NY 10009
212-777-1614

Lew Waldeck
phone: 201-947-1788
email: lwaldeck@iname.com

Change:

Boston Symphony (page 70):

Wayne Rapiert
zip code: 02332



ShuffleBoard — AFM-Style

AFM Secretary-Treasurer Steve Sprague has resigned his office, effective March 12. In a letter to local officers, Sprague wrote: "First, I want you all to know that I have taken this action voluntarily, and as a result of what I believe to have been conduct unbecoming my position as the AFM's chief financial officer. I have unintentionally breached the fiscal trust you have conveyed upon me, for which I believe there is no excuse that could ever condone or forgive such conduct." The AFM International Executive Board has selected Tom Lee, formerly AFM Vice President, to fill the Secretary-Treasurer position, and Harold Bradley, President of Local 257 in Nashville, to fill the Vice President position vacated by Mr. Lee. All AFM offices will be up for election at the AFM Convention in July.

ICSOM/ITF Proposals Submitted to AFM Convention

ICSOM, along with the other player conferences and local officers who are members of the Investigative Task Force (ITF), has presented official proposals for consideration by the 1999 AFM Convention, in keeping with the instructions of the player conferences as expressed at the Unity Conference last summer. ICSOM has submitted only those proposals approved by the ICSOM Conference. Watch for details in the next issue of *Senza Sordino*. In the meantime, check out the ITF's own website at <http://members.xoom.com/goitf>.

1998-99 Wage Chart of ICSOM Orchestra

Orchestra	Weeks 98-99	Annual Minimum Salary	Seniority: 40-yr Cap if no max	EMG	Pension: 40-yr Cap if no max	Pension Type	Pension Based on Min/Prsnl Scale	Vacation Weeks
Alabama	35	21,630	21,630	0	5%	AFM-EP	p	1
Atlanta	52	57,252	59,332	2,860	4%	AFM-EP	m	8
Baltimore	52	59,800	63,960	0	19,500			8
Boston	52	84,500	91,260	0	50,000			10
Buffalo	35	27,150	28,375	1,550	4%	AFM-EP	m+EMG	none
Chicago Lyric	24	38,760	40,892	0	9%	AFM-EP	p	16%/gross
Chicago Sym	52	85,020	93,089	0	48,000			8
Cincinnati	52	72,800	74,360	3,380	22,000+5%	AFM-EP	m	9
Cleveland	52	81,678	92,078	0	40,000			9
Colorado	42	30,366	32,046	2,520	7%	AFM-EP/DCP	p	4
Columbus	46	43,769	45,149	0	8.5%	DCP	p	4
Dallas	52	61,880	63,960	6,760	4%	AFM-EP	m	9
Detroit	52	76,700	78,780	1,534	30,000			9
Florida Orch	35	25,200	27,475	175	5%	AFM-EP	p	3
Florida Phil	43	35,000	36,075	0	8%	AFM-EP	m	4
Grant Park	not available							
Honolulu	30	23,100	24,450	0	5.5%	AFM-EP	p	none
Houston	52	59,800	61,880	3,900	30,000+4%	AFM-EP		9
Indianapolis	52	56,160	59,280	0	see note			8.5
Jacksonville	38	27,968	29,696	0	3.5%	AFM-EP	p	2
Kansas City	42	26,660	26,660	1,302	3.5%	AFM-EP		2
Kennedy Center	27	40,000	42,700	0	9%	AFM-EP	p	6% of pers
Los Angeles	52	82,680	86,840	2,000	7%	AFM-EP	m	10
Louisville	41	26,440	27,076	1,025	2.168%	AFM-EP	m	4
Met Opera	52	74,828	74,828	0	60%		p	10
Milwaukee	44	50,028	51,420	0	5%	AFM-EP	p	6
Minnesota	52	73,840	75,400	3,640	7%	AFM-EP	m	9.5
National	53	78,030	90,220	0	40,000+4%	AFM-EP	m + sen.	8
New Jersey	33	30,855	31,781	825	9%	AFM-EP	m	2
New York Phil	52	84,500	91,208	0	48,000			9
North Carolina	41	34,112	35,137	0	8.5%	403(b)	m	23 days
NYC Ballet	30	43,440	46,065	0	12.5%/gross	AFM-EP	p	4
NYC Opera	29	33,532	37,012	0	10%	AFM-EP	p	4
Oregon	43	35,198	35,198	506	8.5%	AFM-EP	p	2.5
Philadelphia	53	85,330	91,690	0	46,000			10
Phoenix	not available							
Pittsburgh	52	80,860	83,980	0	35,578			10
Rochester	40	31,400	32,330	0	3%	DCP	m	3
Saint Louis	52	69,680	74,880	0	28,000			9
Saint Paul Chamber	38	55,100	56,700	1,200	9%	see note	p	4
San Antonio	35	25,620	27,020	0	6%	AFM-EP	p	3
San Diego	38	24,000	26,160	1,000	7%	private	p	none
SF Ballet	21	29,720	31,040	907	10%	AFM-EP	p	13% of bas
SF Opera	29	53,907	56,807	1,879	9%	AFM-EP	p	4
SF Symphony	52	82,160	87,360	1,560	42,000			10
Syracuse	38	24,175	24,775	0	.0046	private	p	4
Utah	52	38,532	40,092	0	8%	AFM-EP/403(b)	m	9

AS — compiled by ICSOM Treasurer Stephanie Tretick

Relief Weeks	Notes	Orchestra
none	Pension includes Rule of 85.	Alabama
2 services	1 personal leave day.	Atlanta
16 services		Baltimore
1 of the 10 vacation weeks		Boston
none		Buffalo
1 opera relief, prin & asst.prin		Chicago Lyric
2, plus 1 subscription & 2 summer programs		Chicago Sym
16 services for strings	Guar. pen. min. = 45%/base for 30yrs at age 65.	Cincinnati
1 week		Cleveland
7 personal svcs		Colorado
6 services personal leave		Columbus
12 string services	Pension = \$30,000 w. min 30yrs at age 55.	Dallas
8 services for strings & 2nd winds	AFM-EP contributions begin 1999-00.	Detroit
4 svc, strings + 8 pers lv svc for all		Florida Orch
12 svcs strings, prin & 2nd wwnds & 2nd brass		Florida Phil
		Grant Park
none		Honolulu
none		Houston
8 svc stg/1&2ww/prin brss/2nd hn,tpt/timp	Monthly pension benefit=\$(@\$60+)x Yrs svc.	Indianapolis
6 svc	Seniority is approx. \$.15 X yrly svcs X yrs svc	Jacksonville
none		Kansas City
none	Figures approx: orch under 3 contracts: opera,ballet,musicals.	Kennedy Center
+ 1 week strings, 2nd winds		Los Angeles
String relief provisions		Louisville
1 of the 10 vacation weeks	Salary does not include rehearsal or radio pay.	Met Opera
8 services		Milwaukee
6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings		Minnesota
1 week + 1 week for strings		National
none		New Jersey
1 of the 9 vacation weeks	All players receive add'l min. \$20/wk overscale.	New York Phil
5 services personal leave		North Carolina
none		NYC Ballet
none	Base does not include rehearsal pay.	NYC Opera
none		Oregon
1 of the 10 vac wks + 4 pers days & 2 days at Saratoga		Philadelphia
		Phoenix
11th deferred service week possible		Pittsburgh
none		Rochester
1 of the 9 vacation weeks		Saint Louis
1 of 4 = relief week for all	6% AFM-EP, 3% 403(b)	Saint Paul Chamber
none	Terms reduced by 3-wk lockout + 1 unpaid vac. wk.	San Antonio
2 paid & 2 unpaid personal days		San Diego
none	Sal incl vac pay. Yearly guar = 105 perfs.+102 rehs.	SF Ballet
1 opera off each fall for all		SF Opera
3 of the 10 = floating, 1 extra (11th) wk for 2nd wnds		SF Symphony
none		Syracuse
none		Utah



Feedback on Hearing Loss

Several comments and “amplifications” followed the “Hear Today — Gone Tomorrow” article in the last *Senza*:



As a bassoonist who has used the ER15dB attenuators for about 9 years in orchestra and band, I know that it's possible for the performer to adjust or accommodate to the change in sound perception while using the devices. I would hope that musicians would not experience a sense of disorientation while wearing any kind of in-the-ear protection, but rather recognize this increases the relative prominence of their own instrument's sound. Any type of ear plug or attenuator limits the amount of sound received through the air ("air conduction") by one's ears; however, it does not alter the amount of sound received through the performer's body ("bone conduction") by being in physical contact with the instrument itself. The performer will notice immediately the discrepancy between the relative proportions of air- and bone-conducted sound.

With time and practice, one gets used to the apparent loudness of his/her own instrument and of those seated nearby, and the apparent decrease in perceived sound from instruments placed farther away. Adaptation consists of learning to adjust the dynamics of one's instrument to achieve proper balance with others. This adaptation usually comes quickly and with practice, once the performer is aware of the nature and cause of the problem.

Dr. William Dawson

medical advisor to the International Double Reed Society



I believe that treatments can be implemented to reduce the danger that musicians face on stage while satisfying the visual requirements of the performance space.

As with any design process, the first effective solution will be a collaboration among all concerned parties, led by a design team with the ability to integrate all the disparate factors. In many cases, the solution discovered at the end of the process may differ greatly from the “traditional” solutions in place. After this solution has been reached and verified, subsequent treatments in other spaces will be accepted with less skepticism until the creation of a safe performance space for orchestral musicians will become commonplace.

Mark Ramsay, Baran Design Associates

designer of the successful acoustical treatment of the St. James Theatre on Broadway



My comments stem from my own experiences as a horn player with documented hearing loss, having sat for many years in front of the timpani and trumpets. Hearing problems affect musicians in all genres. Peter Townsend of The Who must limit his

on-stage time to about 10 minutes per set, due to injury and discomfort caused by the loud music of his group. A good friend who is in the Chicago Symphony can validate your remarks about violists being at risk. At one particular concert he found himself in front of the bass trombone for a huge Berlioz work, and that night when he went home, he had no hearing in his right ear. It came back, but he had a bad day or two. Many musicians, mostly older colleagues, report tinnitus (ringing in the ears) as well as hearing loss.

To protect against progressive hearing damage and loss of acuity, periodic hearing tests seem reasonable, just as with routine physicals. Musicians at risk for hearing loss might do well to consider what workers in other employment do to protect their health. Amtrak workers tell me they get 2 hearing tests a year, exposed as they are to constant noise levels. On the other hand, the Health and Safety officer for the flight attendants' union tells me there is no such mandated or negotiated regular testing for these employees, and she remarked that she herself has significant hearing loss and no longer flies.

I would recommend to any musician concerned about this issue to go ahead and get a baseline test for their current hearing status. Retests regularly scheduled will provide an early warning radar system that can lead to informed decisions, whatever they may be, and hopefully, before permanent, irreversible, and severe damage occurs. Some may opt for wearing internal hearing protection, others for baffles, while others may decide to make some career changes. Financing regular testing can, however, be an issue if your health plan policy excludes ear tests.

David Sternbach, psychotherapist
medical advisor to ICSOM

[Editor's note: Instituting and funding an injury prevention program, including aural testing, is a fertile field for management and union cooperation of the sort that Mark Ramsay describes in his comments, and as was the case in negotiating the new health and safety provisions in the Broadway contract.]



Further information on hearing protection devices:

The **Acoustic Shield** (“Buffalo baffle”) is available from:

Wenger Corporation	wenger@WengerCorp.com
555 Park Drive	http://www.WengerCorp.com
P.O. Box 448	1-800-733-0393
Owatonna MN 55060	

From Wenger's Acoustic Shield technical specifications: “The initial wave from a loud musical sound (like a trumpet blast) can be reduced up to 46dB with the Shield in place.”

ER-15 and ER-25 earplugs:

Because ER (Etymotic Research) earplugs must be custom fitted to the wearer's ear canal, these devices must be purchased through a local dealer. Etymotic Research, the company that manufactures the sound attenuating component in the earplugs, suggests that any audiologist or hearing aid dispenser in your local area can provide the plugs and the fitting.



Blasting at Carnegie Hall

My wife and I have attended numerous concerts here at Carnegie Hall in New York City, performed by many American and foreign orchestras. Years ago, when attending Mannes College of Music majoring in Trumpet, I attended many concerts at Carnegie Hall. Prior to the actual beginning of the concert, most of the orchestra members entered the stage at random and inconspicuously played on their instruments. Then at some point this automatically stopped to prepare for the entrance of the Concertmaster and then the Conductor.

Well, unfortunately this has changed. Now, starting about one-half hour before the beginning of the concert, most of the orchestra members are on stage playing full out! The main culprits are the Trumpets followed by the rest of the Brass section. The reaction of people around us is very negative, proving that it is not just my wife and I who are appalled at the cacophony of sound we are being subjected to. Many times after hearing this, my wife and I turn to each other and exclaim, "Well, we just heard all the melodies; why don't we go home now!" I realize that acoustics change from one hall to another, but I also strongly feel that this loud pre-concert playing is unnecessary! Some of you may feel somewhat slighted by what I have said; however, I hope you will give it some consideration and tone it down.

*Bruce J. Revesz
ICSOM Delegate, New York City Opera Orchestra
& member of the Trumpet section*



Not-For-Profit Millionaires

My editorial "Do Millionaires Need A Union?" in the last *Senza Sordino* elicited a few comments from readers along the lines of, "The corporate economics of basketball teams and other for-profit businesses are categorically different from those of nonprofits. You can't really compare nonprofit organizations with profit-making businesses." Well—yes, you can, and here's how.

Well-paid doctors work for nonprofit hospitals; well-paid professors, researchers and administrators work for nonprofit universities; and of course, well-paid executive directors and music directors work for nonprofit symphony orchestras, opera companies, and dance companies (even struggling ones). Nonprofits logically argue that to get the necessary talent for the job they must offer a wage and benefit package competitive with those offered in the for-profit sector. The IRS agrees with this principle, and allows a nonprofit to pay compensation comparable to that for similar work in the for-profit sector without jeopardizing the nonprofit's tax exemption. Nonprofits, like for-profits, can—and do—pay some of their employees very well.

Some say that nonprofit income, relying as it often does on charitable fundraising, is not tied as directly to the sale of products and services—labor's output—as for-profit income is. But donations, like ticket sales, are solicited on the strength and inspiration of labor's production—the quality of the orchestra and its programs—so fundraising is just as dependent on labor as earned income is. The fact remains that without the efforts of labor, the

company, be it for-profit or nonprofit, would have no reason to exist and no rationale to attract income of any kind into the enterprise.

The principles of economics, labor relations, supply and demand, and unfortunately, greed and power, apply as much to nonprofits as for-profits. Between 1979 and 1994 real family income in the United States declined 14% for the lowest fifth of the population, but increased by 25% for the highest fifth, and *increased by 83% for the top 1% of the population*,¹ creating one of the greatest disparities between rich and poor in history. A fundamental goal of the labor movement is to reverse that trend. It is a struggle for (from labor's perspective) or against (from the owners' perspective) the mass redistribution of wealth on a global scale. Nonprofit organizations are in no way exempt from participation in that struggle, nor are they immune to its effects.

The economic goals of nonprofit and for-profit boards are photographic negatives of each other, or maybe reverse angle shots—the same image viewed from opposite directions. The personal goal of for-profit board members and owners is to *gain wealth*—maximize corporate profit and get as much of it as possible for themselves. While the public goal of nonprofits is to advance their charitable mission, all too often the private personal goal of nonprofit board members and the community leaders they represent is not to preserve art or advance social welfare, but to *preserve wealth*—to minimize corporate expenses (e.g., cut labor costs) so as to keep the pressure for their charitable gifts as low as possible. For-profit boards seek to gain new wealth—at the expense of labor. Nonprofit boards seek to hang on to the wealth they already have—at the expense of labor. Either way, the effect is the same; cutting the cost of production always benefits the owners and hurts the workers.

Psychological liberation for employees of nonprofits comes with the realization that the money to fund healthy salaries is always there. It is in the pockets of the board members and community wealthholders, who only mete out as much as is absolutely necessary to maintain the level of service they want. It is always possible for the board and community owners of a nonprofit to take good care of their employees and still keep a sizeable chunk of wealth for themselves. But if labor demands little, little is what it gets. Frederick Douglass, 19th-century orator, editor, and former slave, said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

Musicians and other nonprofit employees are asked for concessions not because there is no money, but because those holding the money refuse to part with it. The ultimate controlling factor is the priority that the orchestra holds in the hearts and minds of the public. Community leaders must decide if they want a stable orchestra badly enough to part with enough money to allow it to happen. Is having a good orchestra more important than getting a cheap orchestra? Labor sets the price, so only labor can ask that question.

*Marsha Schweitzer
Editor, Senza Sordino*

¹ from *Dollars and Sense Economic News Service*

*"Voicings" graphic design and concept by Michael Gorman and Norman Foster
(bass and clarinet, respectively, of the Honolulu Symphony)*

TOUR de FARCE
(or, *There's No Place Like Home*)

A survivor of the recent San Francisco Symphony European tour reports a few highlights:

- 1) 30 people with stomach flu
- 2) 50 people (including the tour doctor) with a long-lasting major upper respiratory flu (fevers of 103° F., etc.)
- 3) 10 people with food poisoning
- 4) One broken hand
- 5) One major thumb cut, requiring 8 stitches, from dropping a glass in a hotel bathroom
- 6) One spider bite that led to blood poisoning that came to within 3 hours of our pianist losing a finger. For the rest of the tour, we had a 2-headed pianist; i.e., our pianist played the right hand parts and another member of the orchestra played the left hand.
- 7) One major eye infection
- 8) One sick baby (fever of 105°), but great response and a hotel room visit by a French physician
- 9) One (still) unexplained allergic-like reaction that caused a musician's face to swell up and resulted in hospitalization with IV drips, etc.
- 10) MTT (Michael Tilson Thomas) missed 2 concerts (see #2), but our associate conductor, Alasdair Neale, did a great job.
- 11) One instrument truck was sideswiped by the other instrument truck in an ice-related accident—only the bass drum was damaged—but one truck cab was a total loss. The SFS hired 2 string instrument builders/repairmen to stand by at the concert that night in case of instrument damage. I asked the 2 guys if they knew Francis Cuttner, a string instrument builder who lives across the street from us. "Ah, Douglass Street," was the reply.
- 12) One snowstorm that prevented the (new!) instrument trucks from getting from Brussels to Vienna, so the SFS chartered 2 old Aleutian (i.e., Russian/Bulgarian) 4-prop air freighters and was able to get the instruments to Vienna just before concert time. Our stage crew had to ride in said aircraft. Apparently it was something they will never forget—bumpy, noisy, freezing cold, filled with cigarette smoke, filthy toilets, etc. After the concert, another air freight company was hired to move the instruments to Luxembourg for the flight back to the States. This plane is one of five remaining air freighters made 40 years ago. Two of the five are still being flown and the other 3 are being used for parts.
- 13) One mugging
- 14) Four purse snatchings (\$9,000 worth of cigars was charged on one of the credit cards within 30 minutes of the theft.)
- 15) Four major flight delays, one cancelled flight and one train delay
- 16) Parent of one orchestra member died, so said member had to fly to California and then back to Barcelona in a 4-day time frame.
- 17) Major construction went on in two of the hotels, which precluded getting any rest at said hotels.

But all in all, the tour was a great success!



International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians (ICSOM)

Affiliated with the American Federation of Musicians - AFL-CIO

**ICSOM
Governing Board**

Chairperson
Robert Levine
Milwaukee Symphony
7680 North Longview Drive
Glendale WI 53209-1862
(414) 352-3246 / FAX 352-6090
rtl@icsom.org

President
David R. Angus
Rochester Philharmonic
284 Castlebar Road
Rochester NY 14610
(716) 244-2514 (Voice/FAX)
david.angus@icsom.org

Secretary
Lucinda-Lewis
New Jersey Symphony
4 West 31st Street #921
New York NY 10001
(212) 594-1636 (Voice/FAX)
lucinda-lewis@icsom.org

Treasurer
Stephanie Tretick
Pittsburgh Symphony
3979 Boulevard Drive
Pittsburgh PA 15217-2619
(412) 422-7275 (Voice/FAX)
stephanie.tretick@icsom.org

Editor, Senza Sordino
Marsha Schweitzer
Honolulu Symphony
905 Spencer Street #404
Honolulu HI 96822
(808) 531-6617 (Voice/FAX)
marsha.schweitzer@icsom.org

MEMBERS AT LARGE

William Buchman
Chicago Symphony
1541-J W Henderson Street
Chicago IL 60657
(773) 327-8034
bill.buchman@icsom.org

Michael Moore
Atlanta Symphony
953 Rosedale Road NE
Atlanta GA 30306
(404) 875-TUBA (Voice/FAX)
michael.moore@icsom.org

Mary Plaine
Baltimore Symphony
630 Deepdene Road
Baltimore MD 21210
(410) 433-6063
mary.plaine@icsom.org

Charles Schlueter
Boston Symphony
60 Otis Street
Newtonville MA 02460-1823
(617) 964-4019 / FAX 630-8077
charles.schueter@icsom.org

**ICSOM
Orchestras**

- Alabama Symphony Orchestra
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
- Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
- Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
- Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
- Chicago Symphony Orchestra
- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- Cleveland Orchestra
- Columbus Symphony Orchestra
- Colorado Symphony Orchestra
- Dallas Symphony Orchestra
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra
- Florida Orchestra
- Florida Philharmonic Orchestra
- Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
- Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
- Houston Symphony Orchestra
- Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
- Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra
- Kansas City Symphony
- Kennedy Center Orchestra
- Los Angeles Philharmonic
- Louisville Orchestra
- Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
- Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
- Minnesota Orchestra
- National Symphony Orchestra
- New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
- New York City Ballet Orchestra
- New York City Opera Orchestra
- New York Philharmonic
- North Carolina Symphony
- 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
- San Diego Symphony Orchestra
- San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
- San Francisco Opera Orchestra
- San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
- Syracuse Symphony Orchestra
- Utah Symphony Orchestra

The ICSOM Website
<http://www.icsom.org>



Senza Sordino is the official publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians and is published four to six times a year. ICSOM is affiliated as a conference of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO. Unauthorized reproduction of any part of *Senza Sordino* is strictly forbidden. Copyright © 1999. All rights reserved. ISSN 1074-7850

ICSOM Counsel
Leonard Leibowitz
400 Madison Avenue #600
New York NY 10017
(212) 832-8322 / FAX 605-0909

ICSOM Emeritus Program
Abe Torchinsky
777 W. Germantown Pike #1028
Plymouth Meeting PA 19462
Phone: (610) 277-3981
AbeT825844@aol.com

Orchestra-L and WebMaestro: Robert Levine

Subscriptions: \$10 per year, payable to *Senza Sordino*, c/o Marsha Schweitzer, 905 Spencer Street #404, Honolulu HI 96822