

Senza Sordino

Official Publication of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

VOLUME 38, NO. 2

Online Edition

March 2000

OUR SUCCESSORS: PERFORMING IN SOLIDARITY OR AS SCABS?

By Nathan Kahn

ROPA President Emeritus

Negotiator, AFM Symphonic Services Division

“I think that all of us in the AFM must realize that we can’t just assume that it will always be business as usual. We may have a whole generation of musicians about to emerge from music schools and conservatories who have no idea what struggles we have fought to get symphonic work where it is today.”

– Mark McConnell, Atlanta Ballet Orchestra

Recently, musicians (union, nonunion and/or students) crossed an AFM picket line to replace striking Atlanta Ballet musicians. This same situation occurred in the Miami City Ballet strike of 1993. When this happens, there is the expected outcry of “How could these people do this; don’t they know any better?” We then begin to ask ourselves what more we can do to educate would-be scabs about unionism. The purpose of this article is to give some suggestions as to how we can begin to reverse what I believe to be an alarming level of misunderstanding and/or resentment of “the union” and ignorance about the progress of our profession by conservatory students and entry-level professionals.

Mark McConnell, ROPA delegate from the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra, observed the following:

“As I look back over the situation with the Atlanta Ballet I find myself thinking of my early union days and how much things have changed since then. I joined the AFM back in 1974 when I was a high school student in Lincoln, Nebraska. At that time it was a given that if you wanted to be a musician, you joined the AFM. It was the way things were done.

“Fast forward 26 years and we find the Atlanta Ballet fielding an orchestra of scabs to replace their striking orchestra. It would have been unthinkable in 1974 to cross an orchestra’s picket line, but times have apparently changed.

“Several of the replacements told us that if we didn’t want to work that they had no problem doing it for us. They quoted the management line about how greedy we were to turn down a 38% increase in wages, no matter that management was offering to increase salary just \$4 a service. It was sad to see fellow musicians totally ignore what we were telling them.

“One wonders what could motivate someone to take someone else’s job. Is it greed, ignorance, or have these people received poor advice? Unfortunately it’s a combination of all these things.”

Ten years ago I was playing a gig with some students from a major music school. We went out for a beer after rehearsal, and one

student asked me the following question: “Suppose I get into the cello section of an orchestra and want to advance, what do I do?” I explained to him that if there is a vacancy at the front of the section, the orchestra may hold intra-orchestra auditions prior to holding national auditions. He responded that what he really wanted to know was how he could get the principal cellist’s job, if he felt that he played better than the principal. I gave him the expected response, ending with the statement, “Suppose you were a highly skilled, tenured principal cellist in an orchestra for 20 years, and someone was hired for your section, and some believed that this person played better than you. Should you relinquish your tenured position to this person?” Without batting an eye, the student responded, “Well, sure; the best player always goes to the top regardless, right?”

Our culture teaches students to compete, and music students are certainly no exception. A high school music student must compete for chairs in the youth orchestra, the all-state orchestra, solo and ensemble contests, etc. Then off to music school where students compete for scholarships, solo and award competitions, summer festivals and outside musical employment. Then comes the musical Olympics—THE AUDITION TRAIL. After several years of me-against-the-world audition efforts, BINGO! —the student lands his first orchestral job. First day on the job in the X Symphony Orchestra the Union Steward comes over to the new member asking for money to join the Union, and recites a short speech on solidarity. After some 20 years of conditioning that musician to compete and compete, solidarity and unionism (i.e. working together for everyone’s benefit instead of competing) are totally foreign languages.

Mark McConnell adds: “The most disturbing thing was finding out that many college professors and some professional musicians encouraged some of these people to cross our line.

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The International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM)
Statement of Revenues & Expenses
For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1998 to May 31, 1999

	GENERAL FUND	EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND	ICSOM MEMORIAL FUND	TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS
Revenues				
Dues 98-99	116,858.00			116,858.00
Dues 97-98	16,379.00			16,379.00
Book Royalties	5,345.42			5,345.42
Refunds & Reimbursements	5,900.80			5,900.80
Interest Income	1,983.56	8,248.07	446.04	10,677.67
Directory Advertising Income	1,925.00			1,925.00
Senza Sordino Income	550.00			550.00
CD-Rom Sales	10.00			10.00
Transfers from Other Funds	3,500.00		3,331.00	6,831.00
Total Revenues	152,451.78	8,248.07	3,777.04	164,476.89
Expenses				
Legal Expenses	32,500.00			32,500.00
ICSOM Conference Expenses	22,284.26			22,284.26
Investigative Task Force Meetings	12,110.47			12,110.47
Telephone	10,969.37			10,969.37
Honoraria	9,500.00			9,500.00
Senza Sordino (includes Emeritus)	9,046.35			9,046.35
Directories	8,625.80			8,625.80
Mid-Winter Governing Board Mtg	5,248.35			5,248.35
Conductor Evaluations	3,783.40			3,783.40
Scholarship Awards	3,500.00			3,500.00
Transfers to Other Funds	3,331.00		3,500.00	6,831.00
Income Replacement	3,217.25			3,217.25
Media Committee	2,241.12			2,241.12
Federation-related expenses	1,998.76			1,998.76
Office Equipment	1,993.09			1,993.09
Postage	1,754.34			1,754.34
Bonding Insurance	1,507.00			1,507.00
Website	1,485.66			1,485.66
Duplication	1,350.74			1,350.74
Book Expenses	1,244.49			1,244.49
Email	1,182.93			1,182.93
Troubled Orchestras	804.55			804.55
Stationary & Supplies	730.61			730.61
AFM Convention	644.00			644.00
Misc Transportation	459.16			459.16
Accounting Expenses	315.00			315.00
Subscriptions	297.00			297.00
Bank Charges	223.37			223.37
Presidents Players Council	203.26			203.26
Good & Welfare	90.27			90.27
Dues refund	20.00			20.00
Total Expenses and Transfers	142,661.60	-	3,500.00	146,161.60
Excess of Revenues over Expenses	9,790.18	8,248.07	277.04	18,315.29

Changes in Fund Balances

Fund Balances, beginning of year	65,568.35	189,533.34	12,041.40	267,143.09
Income	152,451.78	8,248.07	3,777.04	164,476.89
Less Expenses	142,661.60	-	3,500.00	146,161.60
Fund Balances, end of year	75,358.53	197,781.41	12,318.44	285,458.38

Balance Sheet
For the Fiscal Year June 1, 1998 to May 31, 1999

Assets				
Cash: checking	63,135.61			63,135.61
Investments		195,281.41	12,318.44	207,599.85
Prepaid Expenses	438.92			438.92
Dues Receivable	11,784.00			11,784.00
Loans Receivable		2,500.00		2,500.00
Total Assets	75,358.53	197,781.41	12,318.44	285,458.38
Liabilities & Fund Balances				
Total Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance	75,358.53	197,781.41	12,318.44	285,458.38
Total Liabilities & Fund Balances	75,358.53	197,781.41	12,318.44	285,458.38

Empty Seats – What Can We Do?

By Tina Ward
Clarinetist, St. Louis Symphony

One evening last fall I was in the musicians' lounge, awaiting the beginning of the evening pops show and reading the memo from my box. The pops, a magic show, was quite entertaining to me. All sorts of things were disappearing and appearing throughout the evening. The music behind the show was fun to play and of a meatier quality than many pops shows. Unfortunately the memo, regarding attendance figures and total ticket sales, was not as pleasing to me. Although the hall often appeared only half full to me, the symphony's ticket revenue was ahead of comparable sales last year. I interpreted that to mean that, although fewer people are attending our symphony orchestra concerts this year than last, we've managed to raise our ticket prices enough to make up the difference. I was not impressed. The fact that revenues were up has not stopped my concern about the vast number of empty seats that I see all too often as I look out into the audience.

For years I have pondered the question is there anything that we, the musicians, could do to increase attendance. I believe there are many things that we can do. My purpose in writing this article is to encourage every musician to look at what s/he can do so that the symphony as an art form continues to flourish in this new century. There has often been a belief that if we marketed better, had better conductors, etc., that all would be well. While it is always theoretically possible to do something better, perhaps doing the old things better is neither humanly possible given available resources nor the only route to salvation. I ask all musicians to consider with open minds what other changes we might make so that symphony orchestra concerts remain economically viable and artistically fulfilling and joyful.

With current audio equipment I can sit comfortably at home and listen to a CD that reproduces the sound of a concert. Not only that, but I can listen as many times as I would like for no additional cost. Why should I bother to go to a concert unless it offers me more than just an aural experience? There are at least three aspects of the live concert that go beyond the experience of merely listening:

1. Visual Presentation
2. Excitement
3. Social Interaction

A concert is an audio-visual event.

In public speaking it is common knowledge¹ that nonverbal communication accounts for most of a speaker's message. The percentages usually referred to are: 55% for gestures, expressions, and movements; 38% for vocal qualities; and 7% for actual words. If we apply this concept to a symphony performance, over half of the overall effect is visual! In thinking back upon my musical training the vast majority of emphasis was placed on the notes, and next upon the overall sound quality and expression; almost nothing was said about visual presentation. This emphasis is exactly the reverse of what the public speaking research indicates to be the order of importance.

During the past few years I have been attending concerts rather than performing them.² Not only did I observe orchestras playing, but also I listened to intermission audience conversations (that is, I eavesdropped). Additionally I attended an audience focus group and listened to many discussions about audience comments. From this I know that the audience does observe what is happening on stage in detail. They enjoy watching musicians who are visibly engrossed in their music-making. They wonder why so many musicians appear to be uninterested, bored and unhappy.

Now that I am back to performing I realize how unaware of the audience and of visual presentation I tend to be while I am on stage. I think there are many reasons why I, and perhaps most musicians, have minimized awareness of the audience. To list just a few:

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Explanatory Notes to the ICSOM Financial Statements (page 2):

ICSOM's financial resources are presently divided among three major funds, each with specific purposes:

The **General Fund** finances ICSOM's primary operations and is replenished with dues collected annually from each ICSOM member orchestra.

The **Emergency Relief Fund or ERF** contains the funds which are disbursed to ICSOM member orchestras at times of critical need. Guidelines and regulations for the use of the ERF are stipulated in ICSOM's bylaws. Currently this fund is self-sustaining.

The **ICSOM Memorial Awards Fund** is the repository for the funds used for student scholarships. The ICSOM bylaws contain guidelines for the fund's use as well as its method of replenishment, currently a \$1 per capita contribution drawn from the annual dues collection.

*Stephanie Tretick
ICSOM Treasurer*

(OUR SUCCESSORS – continued from page 1)

It baffles me to hear what some of these people were telling their students. One teacher told a student who was coming to walk the line in support of the Ballet Orchestra ‘Why do you want to help those guys out? They’re just being greedy, and besides, free-lance musicians don’t deserve a pension, anyway.’ With that attitude coming from a university professor, it’s not surprising that the ballet management was able to field an orchestra.”

Private teachers should be the primary persons responsible for teaching students about the union and real life in the symphonic workplace. Students generally listen to their teachers, and their teachers’ words usually have a profound, lasting impact as they go forward in their musical careers. But what (if anything) are students being taught about the union and the symphonic workplace? Norman Herzberg, retired Professor of Bassoon at the University of Southern California-Los Angeles and mentor to professional bassoonists all over the world, states:

“Asking private teachers to teach unionism to aspiring professionals is making the assumption that the teachers know what unionism is. Present day teachers are at least a generation away from what ‘the old days’ were like. They do not know or care how we got to where we are in this field, and why unionism is, and will be important to us as professionals. Of course, as private teachers we are duty-bound to explain as best we can all of the facets of a professional life in music.”

If we had the opportunity, what is it that we would teach conservatory students in order to enlarge their perspective on the musicians’ union and professional orchestral life? History—where we were, and how we got to where we are. How many conservatory students or entry level professionals are aware that:

- In 1947 the New York Philharmonic was paid \$110 per week for 28 weeks, with no benefits.
- In 1970’s the Tulsa Philharmonic, and other similarly sized orchestras paid scale wages between \$14 and \$25 per service.
- Less than twenty years ago, symphonic musicians in many orchestras could be fired for any reason, at any time.

If we are to begin to turn the tide on this issue, there needs to be a unified, industry-wide effort to educate our successors. This would mean an organized, multifaceted plan involving all of the Player Conferences (ICSOM, OCSM, RMA, TMA and ROPA), the American Federation of Musicians, the AFL-CIO, and perhaps other interested outside music-related organizations.

The following projects, if enacted, could make a significant difference:

1. **The publication of a historical teaching publication** that would document the evolution of AFM symphony orchestras. Such a publication might include essays, photographs, charts, and a parallel instruction video should accompany this publication.
2. **The formation of a pre-professional summer institute** for gifted high school and collegiate musicians. Such an institute could teach students about the history and growth of orchestras, the union’s role in that growth, principles of unionism, negotiation and administration of a collective bargaining agreement, etc. Seminars covering the aforementioned topics should be made available to major summer music centers (Tanglewood, Aspen, etc.)
3. **A unified effort by the Player Conferences and the American Federation of Musicians to educate delegates** in their respective conferences on the importance of these principles, and the importance of passing them on to their students and their colleagues who are teachers. Each Player Conference should devote some time to this issue at their respective national conference.
4. **Continued, persistent efforts to bring our message to the conservatories.** While some music schools have been open to presentations about the AFM, many have not. Shifting the focus of the presentation from “the union” to “the growth of orchestras” should make such a program more attractive. Dialogue on this issue between the leadership of the AFM, the Player Conference chairs and the leadership of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) should occur on an ongoing basis.

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MPTF Brings Orchestras To Airwaves

The following are National Public Radio “Performance Today” orchestra programs acquired for the 1999-2000 season, along with their dates of broadcast, which are being funded by the Music Performance Trust Funds (MPTF):

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra	10/28-30/1999	San Francisco Symphony Orchestra	12/31/1999
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra	02/03-05/2000	Baltimore Symphony Orchestra	01/20-22/2000
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra	01/28-30/2000	Phoenix Symphony Orchestra	11/26-27/1999
Memphis Symphony Orchestra	12/13-14/1999	Virginia Symphony Orchestra	04/2000
Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra	01/21-22/2000		

MMB MUSIC Reaches Middle Age

MMB MUSIC, INC., publisher and distributor of ICSOM's book, *The Musicians Survival Manual*, celebrated 35 years of service in October. The company got its start when Norman Goldberg, President of MMB, worked to bring Orff-Schulwerk, Carl Orff's innovative movement in music education, to the USA, and MMB became the sole US agent for Studio 49 Orff instruments.

Under Goldberg's leadership, MMB has also developed into a major resource for recordings and printed materials for teaching music in the classroom, for the creative arts therapies, special education, the *International Journal of Arts Medicine*, performing arts medicine, parenting/caregiving, and performance of classical music of the twentieth century.

MMB offers music by over 150 living American composers, including Pulitzer Prize-winning George Walker, Robert Starer, Gwyneth Walker, Stephen Hartke, Cindy McTee, Donald Crockett, David Stock, and Sheila Silver.

MMB publishes and distributes many important books and recordings for the creative arts and wellness. Titles of special interest to musicians include *The Musicians Survival Manual* for the treatment and prevention of injuries in musicians by Dr. Richard Norris, *Toward the Zen of Performance* for the development of self-confidence in the performer by Dori Berger, *To Hear Ourselves as Others Hear Us* using tape recording as a tool in music practicing and teaching by James Boyk, and three CD recordings by Daniel Kobialka, violinist in the San Francisco Symphony, for healing and relaxation.



A special note of interest to ICSOM – Douglas Jones, Vice-President of Finance, and Marcia Lee Goldberg, Vice-President of Sales and Marketing, are each married to members of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra: Jenny Lind Jones and Warren Lee Goldberg, respectively. Norman Goldberg, President, was formerly bass clarinetist in the orchestra.

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5. **Orientation programs.** Too many entry-level professionals come into an orchestra with little or no sense of their orchestra's history, and limited knowledge about the role of their union and their orchestra's various committees in that history. Orientation programs for new orchestra members can help bridge that knowledge gap. As an example, Laura Ross and the Nashville Symphony Committee have designed an excellent orientation program where, among other things, new orchestra members learn the history of the NSO, and how the orchestra has achieved what it has now, and why. That program not only yielded a more informed orchestra about what the union is and what it means, but generated interest in service on the Orchestra Committee from musicians who otherwise might not have served.

Charles Schlueter, Principal Trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and ICSOM Governing Board Member, expressed the following views:

"When I joined the AFM almost 50 years ago (can you believe that?), it was a small local in southern Illinois. Actually I had to join two locals, because I played the band concerts in 2 different local jurisdictions. The band concerts were under the auspices of MPTF, which paid the grand sum of \$5.00 per concert. It wasn't a question of whether joining the union was the thing to do; if I wanted to play those concerts, I had to be in the union.

"It's hard to make young people today think 'collectively,' but then, it probably always was. There is so much of the 'me first' attitude around today, not only among musicians, but throughout the whole country. It is not surprising the Atlanta Ballet was able to entice students to be scabs.

"So what do we do? I have been advocating these kinds of projects for years. If the player conferences and the AFM cooperated with the music schools around the country, it might be possible to educate the current students, many of whom will be the next generation of performing musicians, about how all the advancements (improvements) in the professional musicians' life: salaries, benefits, job security, etc. came about because of solidarity."

James Clute, longtime bassist with the Minnesota Orchestra, bass teacher, and former ICSOM Governing Board Member, adds:

"I feel that the International Executive Board of the American Federation of Musicians and/or the Player Conferences should appoint a task force to research these problems and come up with some possible solutions."

Mark McConnell concludes:

"As we enter a new century one of our primary goals as professional musicians must be to educate and inform the next generation of orchestra musicians. If we fail to do this we may all come to regret the direction that our industry seems to be taking."



This article was submitted jointly to Senza Sordino, OCSM's newsletter Una Voce, and ROPA's newsletter The Leading Tone.

1999-2000 ICSOM Orchestra Wage Chart — compiled by ICSOM Treasurer Stephanie Tretick

data source: ICSOM Settlement Bulletins

Orchestra	Weeks 99-00 Salary	Annual Minimum	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	Relief Weeks	Notes
Alabama	37	23,575	23,575		5%	AFM-EP	p	3	none	
Atlanta	52	59,644	62,244	2,860	4%	AFM-EP	m	8	2 services, + 6 svcs stgs, 2nd wnd, brass	1 personal leave day
Baltimore	52	62,400	66,560		19,500			8	16 services	\$3420 bonus due 9/1/2000
Boston	52	88,920	95,950		50,000			10	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	Salary incl \$20/wk overscale for all players
Buffalo	37	30,011	31,306	1,639	6%	AFM-EP	m+EMG	1	none	
Charlotte Sym	38	25,650	27,170		5%	AFM-EP		3	17 services	
Chicago Lyric	25	41,875	44,806		10%	AFM-EP	p	17%/gross	1 opera relief, prin & asst.prin	
Chicago Sym	52	88,400	96,402		53,000			8	2, plus 1 subscription & 2 summer programs	
Cincinnati	52	75,270	76,830	3,640	22,000+6%	AFM-EP	m	9	16 services for strings	Guar. pen. min. = 45%/base for 30yrs at age 65
Cleveland	52	85,280	95,680		40,000			9	1 week	All strings paid at least \$20/wk overscale
Colorado	42	31,836	33,516	2,520	7%	AFM-EP/DCP	p	4	7 svcs	
Columbus	46	44,666	46,276		6%	AFM-EP	p	4	6 services personal leave	
Dallas	52	65,000	67,080	6,760	4%	AFM-EP	m	9	12 string services	
Detroit	52	79,300	81,380	1,534	30,000	AFM-EP		9	8 services for strings & 2nd winds	AFM-EP contributions begin 1999-00.
Florida Orch	36	26,550	28,890	180	6%	AFM-EP	p	3	6 svc, strings + 8 pers lv svc for all	
Florida Phil	43	36,400	37,475		8%	AFM-EP	m	4	12 svcs strings, prin & 2nd wwnds & 2nd brass	
Grant Park	10	9,856	10,231	843	10%	AFM-EP	p	0	none	
Honolulu	33	25,740	27,225		5.5%	AFM-EP	p	0	6 days/yr, cum to 12 paid days	
Houston	52	66,040	68,120	3,900	30,000+4.5%	AFM-EP		9	none	
Indianapolis	52	58,370	61,490	3,502	34,080			9	8 svc stg/1&2ww/prin brss/2nd hn,tpt/timp	
Jacksonville	38	30,005	31,715		3.5%	AFM-EP	p	4		
Kansas City	42	28,503	28,503	1,302	4%	AFM-EP		2	none	
Kennedy Center	28	39,932	42,582		9%	AFM-EP	p	6% of personal scale	none	Figures approx: orch. under 3 contracts: opera,ballet,show
Los Angeles	52	87,880	92,690	2,000	44,930	+4 yr AFM-EP	m	10	+ 1 week strings, 2nd winds	All non-titled stgs paid add'l 1.5% of scale.
Louisville	41	27,539	28,175	1,025	2.168%	AFM-EP	m	4	none	
Met Opera	52	77,792	77,792		60%		p	10	1 of the 10 vacation weeks	Salary does not include rehearsal or radio pay.
Milwaukee	44	51,788	53,348	220	6%	AFM-EP	p	6	8 services	
Minnesota	52	76,310	78,130	3,640	7%	AFM-EP	m	10	6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings	
National	52	79,690	92,170		@45,000	AFM-EP	m+sen.	8	1 week + 1 week for strings	
New Jersey	33	31,845	32,800	1,155	10%	AFM-EP	m	2	none	Pension will be paid on personal scale beginning 00-01.
North Carolina	41	35,670	36,695		8.5%	403(b)	m	24 days	5 services personal leave	
New York Phil	52	88,920	95,628		48,000			9	1 of the 9 vacation weeks	Salary incl \$20/wk overscale for all players.
NYC Ballet	30	45,750	48,750		12.5%/gross	AFM-EP	p	4	none	Salary includes guaranteed 75 hrs rehearsal @ \$50 per hr.
NYC Opera	29	34,957	38,727		10.25%	AFM-EP	p	4	none	Base does not include rehearsal pay.
Oregon	43	36,210	36,210	506	8.5%	AFM-EP	p	17 days	none	
Philadelphia		not available							1 of the 10 vac wks + 4 pers days & 2 days at Saratoga	
Phoenix	38	31,210	32,730		4%	403(b)	m	3	none	
Pittsburgh	52	82,940	86,060		36,493.60			10		
Rochester	40	32,400	33,330		3.5%	DCP	m	3	none	
Saint Louis	52	72,280	77,480		28,500			8	1 week	
Saint Paul Chamber	38	56,962	58,562	1,200	10%	AFM-EP+403(b)	p	3		7% AFM-EP, 3% 403(b)
San Antonio	39	28,548	30,108		6%	AFM-EP	p	4	none	
San Diego	38	24,000	26,160	1,200	18,000	private	p	none	none	
SF Ballet	21	31,043	32,396	907	10%	AFM-EP	p	13% of base	none	Sal incl vac pay. Yrly contract guar = 105 perfs.+102 reh.
SF Opera	29	55,795	58,797	1,945	9%	AFM-EP	p	4	1 opera off each fall for all	
SF Symphony	52	86,840	92,300	1,560	42000			10	2 of the 10 = floating, 1 extra (11th) wk for 2nd wnds	
Syracuse	38	24,659	25,259		.0047	private	p	4	none	
Utah	52	42,380	43,940		8%	EP/403(b)	m	9	none	Salary does not reflect \$500 signing bonus.

(EMPTY SEATS – continued from page 3)

◆ The routine of playing so many concerts tends to take away the special event quality of individual concerts. Rehearsing and performing over 150 concerts a year makes the concert hall feel more like my living room than a place where I am on my best behavior. Indeed, I spend more time on stage than I do in my living room.

◆ I have donned my “orchestra black” so often that it truly is an everyday occurrence for me. During my years of performing I have developed a system to minimize my energy output in stage preparation. Out of curiosity, I timed my change from casual jeans to formal black. I was in and out of the dressing room in less than three minutes. I spent more time climbing the stairs to the dressing room than preparing to be on stage.

◆ Giving my best possible musical performance takes so much of my attention that I feel as though remaining aware of the audience and of how things look puts me into mental and emotional overload. It’s just too much to do all of the time, so, over time, I have minimized the importance of acknowledging the audience. It’s just easier and more comfortable to make the audience invisible.

◆ Focusing on the hundreds or thousands of people out there listening tends to invoke a fear response within me. It is all too easy for me to go into my failure fantasy mode with a flurry of negative thoughts, such as “What if I miss this note? What if I squeak? What if...?”

◆ In all of my musical training I received almost no instruction or guidance in stage etiquette and deportment and even less guidance in relating to and engaging the audience. Rather than risk the disapproval of the audience, I have just minimized their existence.

What can we do?

√ *When we have finished performing, we can place our focus on the audience and respond to their applause.* It may be as simple as smiling and looking at the audience until they finish applauding.³ If you enjoy playing and are glad to be performing, let the audience see it in your gesture and expression.

√ *Wait to put away music and pack up until the audience finishes applauding.* Putting away music, packing up and running off the stage at the first available moment gives the impression that we can’t wait to leave. We have invited guests to come to our house, the concert hall, asked them to pay, and given them a demonstration of our wonderful musical talents and skills. Then, when our guests applaud to thank us for the lovely evening, we do not even acknowledge their presence by looking at them and smiling. Instead we stand up, talk to each other and busily pack up our things.

√ *Be aware that we are visible every moment that the audience is in the hall.* We are on stage and should act accordingly. Take time to check your appearance on the way to the stage. Remember that someone notices each action and gesture on stage.

√ *Don’t talk during rests, announcements, and narration.* Audience attention tends to be drawn to the activity of people on stage. We request that the audience not talk during our performance, let us offer the same courtesy to our colleagues and the audience.

√ *Experiment with some customs that are used successfully elsewhere in the concert halls of the world such as:*

- Have the orchestra make a grand entrance as a whole at the beginning of the concert. In baseball even though the team may have been on the field warming up, the players return to the dugout and are announced to begin the game.

- Ban cases and other nonessential items from the stage. All too often I have noticed miscellaneous papers, coffee cups, and generally unsightly messes spilling from instrument cases.

- Have an orchestra musician, when given a solo bow by the conductor, stand, bow to the audience, and then sit down thus avoiding those uncomfortable moments when individuals are left standing amidst their seated colleagues.

√ *Experiment with dress codes.* Traditionally orchestra members have dressed to minimize individuality and to keep a uniform appearance. In contrast, soloists tend to be acutely aware of the importance of their appearance. In recent years even male soloists and conductors have begun to appear in a greater variety of attire. Rather than attempting uniformity, individuals could be allowed and encouraged to dress in a more interesting, individual way. Even within the constraints of concert black more variety could be allowed. Some concerts could be designated as special dress up events for both the orchestra and the audience. Women might wear colorful formal gowns and men black tie attire with the audience invited to wear the same. Similarly there could be dress down concerts when more casual attire is worn by the orchestra and audience.

√ *Spend time and money looking good.* The audience does notice what you wear and how you wear it. Perhaps orchestras could create an expense account for concert wear by putting aside an amount of money, to be paid to the musicians upon submitting receipts. Some orchestras have hired makeup artists for Halloween costume concerts. Perhaps makeup experts should be hired for a few regular concerts so that everyone on stage has appropriate instruction in how s/he might improve her/his appearance.

√ *Allow management to hire a consultant to work with orchestra members to improve their visual presentation.* In professional theater there is a stage director who gives notes to the cast that include suggestions on all aspects of their performance. Much as we expect the conductor to offer us musical suggestions and guidance, perhaps we would give a better visual presentation if we had some coaching and suggestions from an appropriate professional.

A concert is a unique, exciting event.

Although most orchestras present many concerts a year, each concert is unique and can never be truly duplicated. It is the spontaneity, atmosphere, and excitement which, for me, set live music apart from recordings and creates a truly unique, special and magical event. A concert is a one-of-a-kind, totally handmade product.⁴

We all seem to intuitively know when a special energy permeates a concert. The audience spontaneously and energetically responds. I tend to feel “up,” energized and happy, even though I may be physically fatigued. ☞

All too often I feel it is exclusively up to the conductor to create this special atmosphere. After all, it is s/he who creates the overall shape to the composer's score and is in the position to inspire or squelch my creativity and engagement. There are ways that we can encourage the excitement and creativity of live performance.

What can we do?

√ *Play in an exciting, committed manner.* Each and every musician has the ability to do this. Although I always look outside myself for inspiration, ultimately it is my responsibility to play the best I can at every concert. For me, it takes more physical energy, concentration and musical risk-taking, but the rewards are well worth it. Although it is much easier to do this with an exceptional conductor, in a great hall, with great colleagues, and with a wonderful audience, it is possible to do even in mediocre situations.

√ *Acknowledge and compliment orchestra players, soloists, and conductors who do have a special excitement and magic in their music-making.* Tell them. I respond well to positive feedback. Not only do I feel good, but also it gives me information on how I sound, how my part is fitting in, and how I am doing so that I can create an even better performance. Looking back upon my musical training I was taught almost entirely by negative correction. I was told what I was doing wrong, which I would then work at correcting. Rarely was I ever told what I was doing that was right. Positive comments encourage me to play even better.

√ *Listen for audition candidates who play with a special musical magic.* Risk passing players through to the next round who are able to tell a story musically. Although it is easier for an audition committee to eliminate players for technical and rhythmic imperfections, perhaps the quest for perfection is not as important as a musician who can say something truly special through her/his instrument.

√ *Experiment with audition protocol.* Perhaps orchestras might revisit the old audition practice of not having excerpt lists. The audition committee might hear a truer level of general playing and overall quality by hearing unannounced selections rather than the perfect rendition of a small list of excerpts. This might also better demonstrate the experience level of the candidate.

√ *Encourage having successful candidates play in the orchestra for a substantial period of time.* Use the probationary period as just that—a time of being on trial to see if a player is the right player for the job. As it is now, very few players are released in their probationary years. This creates undue pressure to get the “right” person in the audition. Or sign audition winners to a temporary contract of three or more months to create a significant period of time to see if the candidate truly is the right person. If it became standard orchestra procedure to grant a leave of absence for a player to go to another orchestra on a temporary contract, everyone could benefit. The new orchestra can determine on-the-job suitability and performance, the old orchestra can hire potential candidates, and the musician doesn't lose her/his job security. Perhaps, if the audition committees were less concerned about getting the one perfect player, they might take more risks passing players to the next

round or signing players to a temporary contract who show great musical potential, but still need a little refining or developing.

√ *Remain responsive to everything around you on stage.* A concert is an event. It creates a mood. Be aware and sensitive to that mood and enhance it. Wait until the conductor puts down his hands at the end of a movement to move, shift music, tend to instruments, etc. Don't fidget during quiet sections. Let the atmosphere of the music prevail.

√ *Listen for the special moments and don't interrupt them visually or aurally.* Perhaps swabbing out an instrument or emptying slides can wait until a very quiet section is over. I had been playing professionally for over twenty years before I discovered a way to quietly suck water out of a key rather than noisily blowing it out.

√ *Consider rehearsing in a venue other than the hall for subscription concerts.* I find that rehearsing and performing in exactly the same acoustical environment allows me to be more comfortable and reassured. My sonic surroundings are familiar. But when I am on tour and playing a new venue every night, my ears are more alert. I have to pay more attention and make adjustments. Many tour concerts have a kind of brilliance and excitement that differ from those at home.

A concert is a social event.

The audience is a group of individuals who interact with each other before, during, and after a concert. Most people prefer attending with someone they know. Some people attend more for social reasons than for the music. Symphony development departments have capitalized on the social aspects of a concert and have created rooms where higher level donors can go before the concert and during intermission. Social interaction is a human need, one that the best audio system cannot fulfill.

What can we do?

√ *Let people know you play in an orchestra.* Tell them what excites you about your job. Invite people to concerts. Ask them if they'd like to come. No, I don't necessarily mean that you should give them tickets. Give them brochures. Point out concerts they might find particularly interesting. I carry brochures in the trunk of my car so that, if someone expresses interest, my stash of materials is only as far away as my car. I never realized how important the personal connection was until one of my neighbors told me that now that I am back playing she would like to go to a concert. Having previously met a musician who is on the stage is a tremendous draw. It makes a concert become a personal interaction.

√ *Use comp tickets to introduce new people to orchestra concerts.* Rather than taking the easy route of giving tickets to family members or friends, make an effort to give them to people who would not otherwise come. Giving away tickets to people who will actually use them is time consuming. The best way I know to introduce someone to a symphony orchestra is to have her/him come to a concert to which s/he has been personally invited and where s/he knows s/he is welcome and valued.

√ *Be a good host.* If there is someone in the audience you know, talk to her/him. Acknowledge her/him. Answer questions. Although it may not be appropriate to talk to them from the stage, a look and a smile can acknowledge her/him. Talk to the patrons you recognize while entering and leaving the hall. Introduce them to other orchestra members. Relationships are built on a one-on-one basis.

√ *Participate in events in which orchestra members interact with the audience.* This might be an after-concert reception or a speaking engagement. Perhaps orchestras should experiment with some new ways of mingling musicians, soloists, and conductors with the audience.⁵ I have seen theatre companies in which the cast forms a receiving line in the lobby after every performance and speaks to the audience as they leave the theatre.⁶ Sports teams have special days for meeting the players, taking pictures, etc. What if we experimented and had varying groups of musicians stationed in the lobby or the front of the stage after each concert to talk to the audience, thank them for coming and receive their congratulations?

√ *Be an ambassador.* Everywhere you go, you represent your orchestra. Be the best representative you can be. Your enthusiasm and love of music is contagious if you just let it be known.

It is time for us to take action. At the very least we should be discussing, creating, encouraging, and participating in innovative strategies. Audience development is no longer something management can do alone. We can be a significant force in this process. Let my list be just the beginning of new efforts by musicians and the entire orchestra family working together to fill halls to capacity for every concert. ❖

Tina Ward has been a clarinetist in the St. Louis Symphony since 1970. In 1998-99 she completed assignments with the Kansas City Symphony and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as a Fellow in the American Symphony Orchestra League's Orchestra Management Fellowship Program. Ward has also been the Principal Clarinetist in the Santa Fe Opera and has been chairman of the Artistic Advisory Committee, Travel Committee, and Community Partnership Program Musicians' Task Force of the SLSO.

footnotes:

¹ Malcom Kushner, *Public Speaking for Dummies*®, p. 243.

² For almost three years I was physically disabled from playing. During that time I attended concerts in several cities. Also I participated in a retreat where I heard board members, management staff, conductors, and musicians frankly discuss problems of symphony orchestras related to audience attendance.

³ At least two American orchestras, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and The Houston Symphony, have directed those players at the front of the stage to turn towards the audience during orchestra bows.

⁴ Analee Dorrough, principal flutist in The Houston Symphony, used the description of a concert as handmade in a pre-concert speech asking for annual fund donations.

⁵ The former Music Director of the New Hampshire Music Festival would lead all the orchestra members out to the lobby at the end of the final concert of the summer season to greet the patrons, thank them for coming, and invite them back for next year's season.

⁶ After a St. Louis Symphony pops concert with the juggling Flying Karamazov Brothers, all the performers came out to the front of the stage to talk with interested audience members and sign autographs.

Reform Movement in the AFM Gets High Marks

The Association for Union Democracy, an organization that studies and reports on the international union democracy movement, published an article entitled "Democracy At Work in the Musicians Union" in the January 2000 issue of its newsletter, *The Union Democracy Review*. ICSOM played a major role in the story as presented by AUD:

"For a great story of union democracy and reform, look to the American Federation of Musicians. Commenting on the union's 1999 international convention, *Senza Sordino* [translation: Without Mute], newsletter of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM) writes, '... by the usual standards that ICSOM has measured conventions, it was a rousing success.' Coming from ICSOM, a watchdog for democracy in the AFM, it is an encouraging report."

AUD took notice of the AFM player conferences' historic alliance that created the Investigative Task Force (ITF) and the 1998 Unity Conference leading to the 1999 AFM Convention:

"A Unity Conference, a kind of caucus gathering held months in advance, brought together representatives of the players confer-

ences—symphony musicians, regional orchestras, recording musicians—and Locals 802 and 47 to press their demands at the coming convention."

And ICSOM's role in leading the reform movement in the AFM was recognized:

"But a key force was the symphony and opera musicians who formed ICSOM back in the early sixties to demand rights for the nation's talented musicians. It began as an independent insurgent movement within the AFM; and, at first, it was denounced by top officials as destructive and antiunion. But as the movement gained strength and support, the officials drew back, and made concessions. From an embattled insurgent movement, ICSOM was transformed into an official section of the union as a 'players conference.' Other conferences followed: RMA, the Recording Musicians Association; ROPA, the regional orchestra players; the Canadian symphony musicians. Together, they constituted a powerful national and international movement for reform."



On Educational Institutions and Professional Musicians

[This letter first appeared on the ROPA Internet list:]

The recent events involving the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra, as well as subsequent discussion from Florence Nelson (AFM-SSD) and Andrew Brandt (ROPA President), led me to remember how I viewed the AFM when I was a recent music school graduate. First, a portion of what Florence had to say regarding the ABO strike:

I cannot fathom that any symphony musician, teaching in a conservatory anywhere in the US or Canada, would suggest that a student should displace a union musician on strike. The facts surrounding the Atlanta Ballet have been very public, through the AFM forums, the *International Musician*, and the player conference Internet lists. Therefore, it is very disappointing that these misguided students have so little knowledge of the negotiating process, union affiliation and solidarity.

Once this is over, each and every one of us has a new task before us. It is not enough to teach people how to make a pretty sound or articulate a particular passage properly. We also must instruct people on what the union does for them and what it means to remain unified so something like this never, ever happens again.

And this is from Andy Brandt:

Unfortunately, I'm sure there are a number of teachers (disaffected members of the AFM, angry former members and antiunion nonmembers) who would encourage their students to get work at the cost of those "greedy union musicians." I doubt this is common in the major conservatories, where many of the teachers are also orchestra players (and union members). However, in schools where the faculty do not come from full-time symphony orchestras, I suspect this is more common—especially in those right-to-work states where anti-unionism is more common, even among musicians.

As someone who graduated from college in the 1990's (albeit the early part) I remember very distinctly not caring one iota about pension, health benefits, and loan rates, and I certainly was oblivious to the concept of union solidarity. What I did want to do was make a living playing music. I figured, if it was union work, great, but if I wasn't getting union work, what was the point of joining the union?

In the ongoing ABO situation, members of the scab orchestra likely fit into one or both of the following categories: (1) as Florence said, they are oblivious to the role of the musicians' union, or (2) in the absence of work, they feel the musicians' union doesn't really have much to offer them, and with the union on the sidelines, now they can get in on the action.

The fact is, most graduating students don't separate the AFM much from Jimmy Hoffa. Beyond playing union gigs, they do not see any tangible and "positive" reason (as opposed to negative) for joining the union. I agree that we have to make it a goal to educate students about the AFM. However, the AFM must be seen as vital and worthwhile, not simply a requirement for work. Talking about unity doesn't mean much to most new graduates trying to earn a living.

The only image most students see of the AFM are when musicians are on strike, which, like it or not, reflects negatively in many people's eyes. We have to overcome that. Being a member of the musicians' union must be a positive thing, with many good reasons for joining besides (and beyond) protection when something goes wrong. The everyday existence of an AFM member must reap rewards so that people will want to join.

Craig McNutt

Timpanist, Rhode Island Philharmonic



During the 35 years of my teaching at the University of Southern California I informally taught my students the necessity to join a union, participate in its activities, try to improve it, and obey its principles. Unions and contracts are essential elements in our professional lives and whereas we train students to be competitive in a crowded field, we pay little attention to giving them the strength and understanding about how to improve their lives in a demanding profession.

At the present time, with the outcries against those students who cross the Atlanta Ballet picket lines to replace striking musicians we are overlooking some very important facts. Music schools and conservatories pay little heed to the future of their students. They look upon students as a means of maintaining and justifying their existence. Many students that attend are more interested in scholarships rather than gaining the expertise to graduate as qualified competitive participants in our profession. Where would a yearly class of twenty-five clarinetists find jobs after graduation? How about thirty flutists? One well-known conservatory has a bassoon class of twenty. The present student population in music schools cannot realistically hope for full-time positions. Nor do the music schools offer them much help after they graduate.

Teachers look to recruiting to insure and maintain their own positions. They produce a pool of available musicians with little hope of making a living in music. These students are only too happy to "pick up" some extra money at every opportunity. Hence the situation in Atlanta! Add to the mix antilabor laws such as Taft-Hartley, Landrum-Griffin, right-to-work states, and a political antiunion climate. The task of teaching unionism under such circumstances is formidable at best.

Norman Herzberg

Professor of Bassoon, retired, University of Southern California

Recording Musician, Los Angeles & New York

Former Member, St. Louis Symphony

Teacher and mentor of many ICSOM orchestra bassoonists



Electronic Media Forum

The ICSOM Media Committee, representatives from ROPA and the AFM, and symphony, opera and ballet managers have been meeting to discuss distribution of recorded music produced by symphonic orchestras over the Internet.

Any members interested in following the discussion points can read the notes of the meetings on the ICSOM website. Any collective bargaining agreement reached during these discussions will be submitted for ratification to the musicians employed by the signatory orchestras.



Attention ICSOM Delegates!
Our official travel agents have moved:

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CORRECTIONS to the ICSOM Directory
should be sent to ICSOM Directory Supervisor Mary Plaine. 

A list of errors and updates will appear in a future issue of *Senza Sordino*.



MANY THANKS to members of the Houston and Dallas Symphonies, who made my recent trip to the AFM Western Conference a delight, and who, I'm sure, set a new standard for hospitality to visiting ICSOM dignitaries. With home-cooked meals, vintage Scotch, schlepping, lodging, scintillating conversation and beautiful music, they made my sojourn in Texas not just a pleasant, but an exhilarating, experience.

Marsha Schweitzer
Senza Editor

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The ICSOM Website
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