

Senza Sordino

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Strike and Settlement in Houston

by David Waters, Houston Symphony ICSOM Delegate

As reported by Roger Kaza in the February issue of *Senza Sordino*, we musicians of the Houston Symphony had been working without a contract since October 2002. Our management had asked for significant pay cuts, changes in contractual rules, and cutting five string positions by attrition, and we had filed charges of bad-faith negotiating with the National Labor Relations Board. Here's the rest of the story.

Just after the *Columbia* space shuttle disaster we played a free memorial concert on February 5 with our music director, Hans Graf, conducting a program that included Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony.

Dave Kirk, our orchestra committee chairman and spokesman, made many appearances, including those at the City Council and before the *Houston Chronicle* editorial board. He made statements at many events for television and radio and wrote press releases almost constantly from October on.

We hired an excellent public relations firm with a lot of experience in political and media areas. The firm was valuable in giving advice, creating media events, getting information and opinions that favored our cause into radio, television, and print, and helping our leaflet campaign.

We distributed leaflets with our information and viewpoint at almost every concert from September on. Our public website, www.upbeat.org, grew steadily, and our webmaster, Tim Garland, produced a private site for us with background and current information about meetings and directives.

Many letters of support were published in the *Houston Chronicle*. A fair editorial attitude allowed differing points of view to be heard. On February 19 the *Chronicle* ran a great article by Dr. David Gottlieb, former president of the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, our summer home. He pointed to the ineffectiveness of our board and described how large portions of Houston's business community were not asked for financial

support. On the same day, the *Houston Press*, a large free weekly paper, published an in-depth article with historical perspective on our orchestra's finances, showing how our board managed to stay in financial trouble even during boom times.

We were scheduled to play at the Symphony Ball on March 7. The Houston Symphony League, our women's volunteer group, raises a large sum at this annual social highlight. As we approached the Ball we needed to decide on a unified plan of action after many months of meetings. Our negotiating committee met with our PR firm and orchestra committee and came up with a plan with the most benefit and least liability, presenting it at the February 24 orchestra meeting: we would continue to play under the terms of the old contract until September 1, and if no agreement had been reached by then, we would strike. This allowed the Ball to proceed, more support to build, and more PR to be done. We would also hold town meetings to gather ideas and lead to a settlement representing a shared vision for the Houston Symphony. We made it clear that if any cuts were imposed, we would strike. We accepted this plan, and it was published in the *Chronicle* on February 26.

On March 4, Society President Jeff Early sent our negotiating committee a "best and final" offer, with cuts in salaries and new proposals (for changes in working conditions and shortening the required notice of bankruptcy or insolvency to one month) which had not been discussed at any previous meetings. The Society set a deadline of 2:00 PM on March 8 for us to accept the offer.

The earliest the orchestra could meet was Friday, March 7. Our negotiating committee offered a counter-proposal with drastic cuts totaling \$1.1 million in one year, as the Society had requested all along. Our proposal also contained a plan to gradually bring us back toward a competitive position over four years. Less than 45 minutes after receiving the proposal, the Society repeated its final offer. On Saturday, after the 2:00 PM deadline, they decided to allow the orchestra to play the second of three Irish Pops concerts that night and then to unilaterally impose their "best and final" offer. On Sunday, March 9, we went on strike.

At that final concert on Saturday, we passed out flyers with a picture of the Society's lawyer, who had rejected our proposal. On Sunday we held a picket demonstration at his home, with good television coverage. That night we held a long picket vigil at Jones Hall at concert time, with a live brass group. We picketed Jones Hall three times a day. We held "guerilla" concerts with our 10-piece brass group in front of the lawyer's firm and at the bank where the Society president works. Tom Elliott, our representative to the Society's Executive Committee, gave an admirable address at its meeting on March 11 and described to us its state of disarray.

(continued on last page— see HOUSTON)

In This Issue

Houston Strike and Settlement	1
Officer Reports	2
Chicago Symphony Minority Fellowships	4
Counsel Report	5
2002–2003 ICSOM Wage Chart	6
AFM Convention Watch	7
EMF Media Survey Results	7
Remembering Russell Brodine	8
Sphinx Competition	9

Chairperson's Report

Jan Gippo



The annual mid-winter meeting of the ICSOM Governing Board took place in St. Louis on February 24, 2003. Even though a snowstorm created havoc with all the airlines and forced us to start nearly an hour late, we were able to cover all of our many agenda items.

The meeting began with an attempt to determine exactly who should be listed in the

ICSOM Directory, and a subcommittee was appointed to formulate a proposal for discussion at the annual conference. The Governing Board is dedicated to producing the directory in a timely and useful fashion, and we looked at deadlines for submitting names, for publication, and for distribution. With a new method of updating the directory online, we believe that orchestras can and should provide directory information by December 15 and that the publisher should have all the material by January 15.

We next examined ICSOM finances. Thanks to Michael Moore, our record-keeping is clear and current. Tardiness in payment of dues continues to be a frustrating problem, and the Governing Board will submit a proposal at the annual conference addressing this. We discussed establishing standing honoraria for work provided by the annual conference coordinator, an ICSOM archivist, the ICSOM webmaster, and Senza Sordino production manager. We also reached agreement on terms of a three-year contract with our esteemed legal counsel, Leonard Leibowitz, subject to delegates' approval.

Our conductor evaluation program is important, but we believe that the current system has some problems: a subcommittee headed by Brian Rood will have recommendations for delegates' consideration at the 2003 conference. Orchestra-L access and membership were discussed, and there will be some proposals to consider in this area also.

In accordance with ICSOM bylaws we appointed a Nominating Committee. Herb Winslow (St. Paul Chamber Orchestra) will serve as chair. With our consent, Herb selected Nancy Agres (Indianapolis Symphony) and Trevor Johnson (Louisville Orchestra) to serve as well.

A new Media Committee was appointed. Bill Foster (National Symphony) will be the chairman. Other members are Paul Frankenfeld (Cincinnati Symphony), John Koen (Philadelphia Orchestra), Steve Lester (Chicago Symphony), Laura Ross (Nashville Symphony), Fiona Simon (New York Philharmonic), and Rich Weiner (Cleveland Orchestra). ICSOM President Brian Rood and I will serve *ex officio*.

The Governing Board is working to improve communications, to inform all symphony musicians of important topics, and to create legislation to ensure that the collective voice of our 51 orchestras of ICSOM is heard and respected.

(continued on page 5— see CHAIRPERSON)

President's Report

Brian Rood



Several ICSOM orchestras are reporting critical financial conditions. These reports focus on orchestra deficits and demands for wage concessions from musicians.

Some of these orchestras are ones that have been in trouble many times before. The San Antonio Symphony has postponed paydays to its musicians and sometimes issued only partial paychecks. The Louisville Orchestra is projecting a large deficit this year and is seeking concessions of 17% from previously negotiated compensation. The Florida Philharmonic is yet another orchestra with financial concerns.

But there are also orchestras not usually regarded as "troubled orchestras" that are reporting severe financial problems, due at least in part to the fallout from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and to the continuing downturn in the economy and subsequent decrease in corporate and individual giving and in endowment income. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is reporting a significant deficit. Pittsburgh's endowment has lost approximately \$40 million. Preliminary budget projections in Milwaukee show a shortfall approaching \$2.5 million. Musicians of the Baltimore Symphony recently agreed to reopen their contract and accept modifications, including deferred pay raises. As reported elsewhere in these pages, the musicians of the Houston Symphony endured a strike due to wage and benefit concessions imposed upon them unilaterally.

Regional orchestras are also facing critical financial times. The Colorado Springs Symphony exists no more after its Chapter 7 bankruptcy, although a new Colorado Springs Philharmonic may follow. The halls in Tulsa and Savannah are dark because managements ended those orchestras' seasons prematurely. Financial conditions concern musicians in Charleston, and there are distressing reports that Charleston's management is considering "tour concerts" in Savannah while Savannah Symphony musicians are unemployed. Additionally, let us remember our colleagues in San Jose, whose management shut the orchestra's doors last year.

Virtually every orchestra in this country copes with budget concerns in some manner every year. Some borrow from established lines of credit. Others trim their budgets to leaner levels. This year, however, musicians are increasingly being asked to "share the pain" during economic difficulties.

ICSOM efforts to assist musicians during such times include:

- Interest-free loans from the ICSOM Emergency Relief Fund, started in 1965 to provide temporary support to member orchestras.
- Well-established networks of musician activists within ICSOM orchestras to help orchestras communicate with each other so that orchestras may observe and learn from each other, offer mutual support, and, most of all, stand together in solidarity. Delegates

(continued on page 9— see PRESIDENT)

Secretary's Report

Laura Ross



There are days I hate to turn on my computer. Nearly every day we read bad news about this or that orchestra. Sadly, the newspaper articles we read online on Orchestra-L tell only part of the story.

Many musicians are aware that the Houston Symphony was on strike and recently settled, but many don't understand why their Houston colleagues chose to go on strike in the first place. Many don't know that Houston's board refused to provide the financial information they were obliged to share with the musicians, or understand that the musicians were expected to shoulder debts caused by poor management decisions.

In Colorado Springs the newspaper didn't explain what was behind the orchestra's decision to withdraw its objection when management petitioned the bankruptcy court to throw out the old collective bargaining agreement. The musicians believed that they would more likely be successful by starting their own orchestra under their own terms with a new manager and board of directors, than to continue working with a group that expected the musicians to play and be paid only after expenses were met. Where did they ever get the idea that musicians weren't an expense?!

The Savannah Symphony is fighting for its life and pleading for financial support, and newspapers report they might also be fending off a scheme to replace the orchestra with the Charleston Symphony or some sort of regional orchestra—and it's over 100 miles from Charleston to Savannah!

Pittsburgh, Baltimore, San Antonio, Louisville, and Rochester are in the news. All over the country, orchestras are being asked to re-open their contracts. You have to wonder how much of what we are reading is fueling the fire because not only are we not always getting the whole story, neither are the managers. Many of our colleagues hear rumors of problems, while others don't even know these situations are occurring.

We cannot understand the motivation of our fellow musicians if we rely only on newspapers and the Internet. ICSOM, ROPA, OCSM, RMA, and TMA were founded on the principle that what makes us strong is unity, and there can be no unity if there is no communication. If there is a message your orchestra needs to disseminate, or if you wish to request letters and phone calls and e-mail from your colleagues in other orchestras, there are options other than newspapers. I am always willing to do whatever is necessary to help your orchestra get your message out. When the Internet was not so prevalent, bulletins were sent to the orchestras for action within a day or two of the request. Bulletins announced strikes, letter-writing campaigns, financial requests, and settlements. While many requests are made on Orchestra-L and the ICSOM website, I, as ICSOM secretary, am also available to send your message to a wider audience with an ICSOM bulletin. It's there for the asking.

Negotiations will begin for many of our colleagues this spring, while others have yet to settle. I encourage your orchestra's delegate to contact me as soon as you have ratified your new agreement so your colleagues across the country can understand fully the terms of your settlement.

I continue with my duties as "queen of the minutes," having posted fifteen summaries of Governing Board meetings and conference calls on the ICSOM website since August. I am also beginning to gear up for the ICSOM conference mailing this spring. Notices to local union and AFM officers and staff, dissemination of information to all conference attendees, and changes in registration procedures are all under review. Resolutions to be submitted by the Governing Board will be included in pre-conference mailings, and should your orchestra have a resolution it would like to present, it can be sent to me for inclusion in these mailings as well.

Keep the information coming!

Treasurer's Report

Michael Moore



Your ICSOM dues are spent to publish *Senza Sordino* and the *ICSOM Directory*, provide the Conductor Evaluation program, print and mail bulletins, pay for communications through telephone, email, teleconferencing and listserves, buy computers and software, purchase supplies, maintain bank accounts, pay honoraria, and fund Sphinx scholarships. Our most expensive activities are the annual conference (\$17,000 in 2002), travel (\$21,000 so far this fiscal year), and legal fees.

During the first seven months of this fiscal year we have spent \$89,664. Dues paid to date amount to \$105,000, with five months remaining in our fiscal year. We hope that orchestras (or locals) that have not yet sent in dues will do so soon so that we do not have a cash-flow problem. The Governing Board has the authority to borrow from the Emergency Relief Fund if we get in a bind, but that makes less money available to orchestras in need. Because timely payment of dues is essential to maintaining unimpeded cash flow, the Governing Board will be presenting a resolution at the 2003 conference which we hope will be an incentive to submit dues payments promptly.

On another subject, Governing Board members have accepted a challenge to make significant contributions to TEMPO. TEMPO is vital for the survival of our orchestras. It is money well spent in our own vested interest. Laws don't permit unions to fund political lobbying activities from dues, so musicians must fund TEMPO aggressively themselves. Don't just say, "Hey, that's a good idea. Someone should give them money!" That someone is YOU. *Invest in TEMPO*. If there is enough money, our union can effectively influence legislation that can greatly affect your livelihood. An investment in TEMPO is an investment in yourself.

Editor's Report

Tom Hall



In addition to its hard-copy publications, ICSOM also “publishes” an online news service, Orchestra-L. One of the more extensive threads on Orchestra-L some months ago—and a topic of continuing interest and comment—has been “Problems at the Airport.” It started with a posting about a bassoonist who had his reeds and metronome confiscated by a security guard.

Pretty soon there were lots of other stories posted about similar problems, about how to deal with them, and about what happens to items that are confiscated by airport security personnel. While some of the stories were humorous—one bassoonist swallowed his reed-soaking water to prove it was not a dangerous substance—others were pretty serious.

Current law allows airlines to create their own policies regarding carry-on items, and it gives them discretion to permit musicians to carry on their instruments. Musicians are at the mercy of individual airline gate agents, and practice is not consistent or predictable.

The airlines control carry-on policy, and the airlines belong to the Air Transport Association (ATA). One writer suggested lobbying the ATA; another reported that his letter to the ATA had been returned marked “Unread.”

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), a government agency, employs personnel to carry out security checks. Fortunately, the TSA, in response to extensive lobbying by the AFM, recently revised its policies regarding carrying musical instruments on board. In a letter to AFM President Tom Lee in January, Thomas Blank, TSA assistant administrator for security regulation and policy, announced that airline operators have been instructed to allow musical instruments as carry-on baggage and that AFM members experiencing problems with security should speak to a screening supervisor.

Knowing that those who encounter difficulties might find it helpful to have a copy of the TSA letter with them, we planned to reproduce that letter in this issue of *Senza Sordino* as a service to all musicians in ICSOM orchestras, but this was not possible. AFM members wishing a copy of the letter should contact the AFM office in New York and provide their name, address, and phone number. They will be sent a copy of the TSA letter and an official AFM cover letter written by President Lee. (Copies are also downloadable from the AFM and ICSOM websites.)

While this may not eliminate all problems at the airport—every airline still sets its own policies—some persons using these letters have apparently found them helpful, and it’s a step in the right direction.

Senza Sordino is the official voice of ICSOM and reflects ICSOM policy. However, there are many topics discussed in *Senza Sordino* on which ICSOM has no official policy; the opinions thus expressed in *Senza Sordino* are those of the author(s) and not necessarily of ICSOM, its officers or members. Articles and letters expressing differing viewpoints are welcomed.

Chicago Symphony Initiates Minority Fellowship Program

by Rachel Goldstein, Chicago Symphony ICSOM Delegate

The Chicago Symphony has recently announced auditions for its new fellowship program for minorities under-represented in symphony orchestras. This program was developed by the Orchestra Diversity Committee, which consists of representatives from musicians, management, trustees, and the union. This committee was formed in 1988, under the name of Affirmative Action Training Committee. The purpose of this committee, as defined in our collective bargaining agreement, is “to study the development and financing of a music training program for minorities, with the objective of increasing the available pool of qualified minority applicants for membership in symphony and opera orchestras.” The Diversity Committee has also agreed on several other initiatives designed to further this goal. These include:

1. Communicating with minority musicians, creating a database of such musicians and informing them of regular auditions for openings in the orchestra.
2. Targeting the Civic Orchestra (the Chicago Symphony’s training orchestra) to provide advanced training for minority musicians.
3. Encouraging each section of the orchestra to seek minority musicians to audition for placement on their list of extra (substitute) musicians.
4. Expanding our existing musician residency program and working together with the Chicago public schools to create a new school music program, with the aim of providing support for talented children.

The Chicago Symphony has procured funding to support up to two fellows per season. All fellowship candidates must be between the ages of 18 and 34 and must have completed high school. Fellows will be selected by taking part in the regular blind auditions for substitute musicians. The audition committee will have no knowledge of any candidate’s ethnicity or interest in the fellowship program. Only those candidates who pass this audition may be considered for a CSO fellowship. The fellowship has a one-year term but may be extended for an additional year by mutual consent. Fellows will receive a stipend of \$36,000, medical coverage, and a travel allowance for auditions. All fellows will be members of the AFM. Fellows will perform with the CSO for approximately 18 weeks as substitute musicians, will receive coaching and mentoring with CSO members, and will take part in CSO education and community relations activities. The program will be tailored to best serve each fellow’s needs.

Candidates who show promise but are not yet ready for the CSO fellowship may be offered a CSO apprentice fellowship. This will involve participation in the Civic Orchestra, coaching and mentoring by CSO members, and involvement with music programs of local universities and other educational institutions. Like the CSO fellowship, this program will be customized to best serve each fellow. Apprentice fellows will receive a stipend of \$6,000.

The musicians of the Chicago Symphony are committed to the cause of assisting minority musicians, and we are looking forward to making a positive contribution in the lives of many young people through these fellowships and other programs.

Counsel's Report

Leonard Leibowitz

Musicians' Voices Must Be Heard



Amidst all the rancorous talk of minimums, featherbedding, and numbers in the recent labor dispute between AFM Local 802 and the League of American Theatres and Producers there is an underlying philosophical and economic question which has not been adequately addressed: on what theory may a group of employees or their union tell an employer how many employees it must hire?

After all, it is employers who create the work enterprise; it is they who invest the money (their own or someone else's), and it is they who take the risk of the loss of that investment if the project fails to return a profit. The employees invest only their time, effort, and talent, for which they are paid an amount agreed upon whether the project succeeds or fails. What gives them standing to insist that the employer hire more of them than the employer believes he or she wants or needs?

Such a concept is virtually unknown in the industrial sector. Nevertheless, in the collective bargaining agreement between the Union and the League the parties have agreed that in each Broadway theater at which a musical is presented there must be a minimum number of musicians hired. The question is relevant to symphony orchestras as well, because many orchestra collective bargaining agreements contain provisions insuring minimum numbers of musicians.

The answer is to be found in the nature of professional employees in general and performing artists in particular.

Except as it affects their continued employment, most non-professional employees are not very concerned with the quality of the employer's product. The driver of a delivery truck would never negotiate with his or her employer about the quality of the beer or soft drink that he or she is delivering. As long as the public is buying it, and his or her job is therefore secure, his or her interest in the quality of the product is practically nil.

In contrast, school teachers, social workers, doctors employed in hospitals, and lawyers who render legal services to the poor are usually vitally concerned with the quality of those services being delivered to their students, patients, or clients. These professionals are not in it for the money; most of them could earn considerably more in other fields of endeavor. They have devoted their lives to their profession, and they want it to be worthwhile, productive, and rewarding in its own right. Thus, for those professionals who are represented by a union, the bargaining issues are not limited to wages and benefits, but include issues of quality care, support systems, and caseload. Quite often such issues involve discussions of staffing levels and the like.

In the performing arts, the concern by the performers for the quality of the employer's product is even greater: for all intents and purposes, they are the product! It is *they* that the customer has paid to see, experience, and enjoy.

Surely some of these performers have become enormously wealthy as a result of their talent and, in some cases, their luck. Such performers may be members of unions, but they really don't need the union to negotiate job security or wages for them. Most, however, are not so blessed, and although they too are part of the product, they need the protection and influence of collective action through their union to express their needs and desires. Those needs and desires include the enhancement and preservation of their art and talent, so that the expression of their art is meaningful to the audience and to themselves. Unfortunately, they cannot rely on the employers, whose expertise may extend to production, management, fund-raising, sales, and promotion but not to art and to its presentation in the finest quality, especially if such presentation conflicts with limited financial resources.

In other words, employers are often faced with choosing between economics and quality. Members of management who bear the responsibility of paying the bills must, of course, find ways and means of raising the money to do so, but they must guard against losing sight of the purpose and quality of the enterprise when making those choices. And they must heed the advice of those who are more qualified to do so to evaluate the ingredients necessary to produce the highest quality.

In the recent labor dispute, the parties were not even speaking the same language. The employers and producers were talking "numbers"—how many musicians they must hire and how much it will cost. The musicians were talking "musical quality"—what combination of instruments is necessary to present the finest quality orchestra for the Broadway stage. The musicians, composers, orchestrators, and arrangers have the expertise to determine what it takes to produce the finest quality presentation to a public paying upwards of \$100 for a ticket. Not a single member of this "creative team" has denied the need for full-size orchestras in most Broadway musicals.

The dispute has been settled, although the agreement is yet to be ratified as this issue goes to press. There should be no question of the stake that the musicians have in situations like this. Their professional lives are on the line just as much as the money of the employers. For the sake of the art form, and for the expectations of the audience, their voices must always be heard.

Chairperson

(continued from page 2)

In the last issue of *Senza Sordino* I wrote about the state of the arts in America, the need for influence on Capitol Hill, and the desirability of each musician contributing to the AFM's political action arm, TEMPO. Mr. John Grimes, vice president of the Boston local, reminded us that local unions are the traditional conduit for donations to TEMPO, and we certainly do not discourage this. If you choose to donate through your local, the local will do all the paper work and get the credit. However you choose to give, the important thing is to donate!

2002–2003 ICSOM Wage Chart

prepared by Richard Levine, ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large

Orchestra	Season Length	Minimum Annual Salary	Annual EMG	Seniority Pay (22 Years)	Vacation	Personal Leave	Average Srvcs/Wk
Alabama	40 weeks	\$ 29,360	none	\$800	3 weeks	2 days	7–8
Atlanta	52 weeks	\$ 67,600	\$4,680	\$1,456	8 weeks	1 day	8
Baltimore	52 weeks	\$ 72,800	none	\$4,160	9 weeks	1 day	8
Boston	52 weeks	\$ 99,580	none	\$6,722	10 weeks	unspecified	8
Buffalo	39 weeks	\$ 37,245	\$1,755	\$780	2 weeks	4 services	8
Charlotte	40 weeks	\$ 31,200	none	\$2,640	3 weeks	4 days	7–8
Chicago Lyric	26 weeks	\$ 50,050	none	\$3,253	18% of salary	3 days	6
Chicago Symphony	52 weeks	\$100,100	none	\$8,060	10 weeks	3 days	7–8
Cincinnati	53 weeks	\$ 85,065	\$3,710	\$2,120	9 weeks	3 days	8
Cleveland Orchestra	52 weeks	\$ 96,460	none	\$10,400	10 weeks	3 days ¹⁸	7–8
Colorado	43 weeks	\$ 39,689	\$2,580	\$1,032	4 weeks ¹¹	7 services	8
Columbus	47 weeks	\$ 50,337	none	\$564	4 weeks	6 services	8
Dallas	52 weeks	\$ 74,100	\$6,760	\$1,040	9 weeks	2 days	8
Detroit	52 weeks	\$ 87,100	⁹	\$3,640	9 weeks	4 days	8
Florida Orchestra	36 weeks	\$ 28,008	\$180	\$1,044	3 weeks	8 services	8
Florida Philharmonic	39 weeks	\$ 38,946	none	\$780	5 weeks	6 services	8
Fort Worth	51 weeks	\$ 49,156	\$1,000	none	35 days	9 days ¹⁹	7–8
Grant Park	10 weeks	\$ 9,974	\$910	\$155	none	4 days ²⁰	8
Honolulu	33 weeks	\$ 28,380	none	\$1,089	none	6 days	8
Houston ¹	50 weeks ¹	\$67,500 ¹	\$3,750 ¹	\$1,000 ¹	9 weeks	2 days ²¹	8
Indianapolis	52 weeks	\$ 70,200	none	\$2,080	8.5 weeks ¹²	5 days	7–8
Jacksonville	37 weeks	\$ 31,672	none	\$980	3 weeks	8 days	8
Kansas City	42 weeks	\$ 35,849	\$1,302	none	19 days	2 days	8
Kennedy Center	27 weeks	\$ 47,359	none	\$3,780	none	2 days + 2 svcs ²²	6–7
Los Angeles	52 weeks	\$98,540	\$2,000	\$6,775	10 weeks ¹³	2 services	7–8
Louisville	42 weeks	\$33,559	none	\$441	4 weeks	7 services	8
Metropolitan Opera	52 weeks	\$113,500	none	none	10 weeks	4 days ²³	7–8
Milwaukee	44 weeks	\$58,300	\$792	\$1,285	6 weeks	4 days	7–8
Minnesota	52 weeks	\$88,660	\$3,900	\$2,340	10 weeks	1 day	8
Nashville	40 weeks	\$32,280	\$1,040	\$800	3 weeks	4 services ²⁴	8
National	52 weeks	\$89,700	none	\$14,040	9 weeks ¹⁴	2 days	7–8
New Jersey	36 weeks	\$41,760	\$1,440	\$1,253	3 weeks	²⁵	7
New York City Ballet	30 weeks	\$50,550 ⁶	none	\$2,700	4 weeks	3 days	7–8
New York City Opera	29 weeks	\$47,150 ⁷	none	\$2,233	4 weeks	2 days	7–8
New York Philharmonic	52 weeks	\$98,540 ⁸	none	\$6,775	9 weeks	none	8
North Carolina	43 weeks ²	\$43,000	none	\$1,161	25 days	5 services	8
Oregon	43 weeks	\$42,784	\$553	none	2.5 weeks	6–12 services ²⁶	6
Philadelphia	52 weeks	\$98,800	none	\$5,720	10 weeks	4 days	7–8
Phoenix	38 weeks	\$30,450	none	\$760	3 weeks	8 services	8
Pittsburgh	52 weeks	\$90,220	none	\$3,120	10 weeks	1 day	8
Rochester	41 weeks	\$37,925	none	\$660	3 weeks	none	8
Saint Louis	42 weeks	\$68,730	none	\$3,360	4 wks+6 days ¹⁵	none	7
Saint Paul	38 weeks	\$65,740	\$1,200	\$1,600	4 weeks	4 services	8
San Antonio	33 weeks	\$28,050	none	\$ 726	none ¹⁶	8 services	7
San Diego	225 svcs ⁴	\$27,000	\$1,300	\$1,080	6 services	4 days ²⁷	n/a
San Francisco Ballet	⁵	\$35,759	\$ 906	\$1,457	13% of wages	1 day	n/a
San Francisco Opera	29 weeks	\$64,677	\$2,255	\$3,479	4 weeks	3 days	7–8
San Francisco Symphony	52 weeks	\$97,500	\$1,560 ¹⁰	\$5,200	10 weeks ¹⁷	no limit	8
Syracuse	38 weeks	\$26,420	none	\$ 481	4 weeks	8 services	7–8
Utah	52 weeks	\$54,600	none	\$1,300	9 weeks	no limit	7–8
Virginia	41 weeks	\$23,026	none	\$492	2 weeks	6 days	7–8

Wage Chart Notes

The data in this chart were initially extracted from the 2002-2003 AFM Wage Chart and then corrected and updated by delegates. Two of the columns deserve comment. Figures listed under *Minimum Annual Salary* are exclusive of EMG. The *Seniority Pay (22 Years)* column may be used for quick but incomplete comparisons of seniority pay. Entries in that column were obtained by calculating the annual seniority pay for a musician with an arbitrarily-chosen 22 years of service.

- ¹ Played without contract at \$1,350 + \$75 EMG per week from 10/02 through 3/03 and at same rates under contract thereafter; 3 of the 50 listed weeks went unpaid during strike; 2 unpaid floating furlough weeks to be taken during work weeks
- ² Plus 1 optional weeks
- ³ 10 additional summer weeks with no services at flat \$250/week
- ⁴ Scheduled within 38 weeks
- ⁵ 105 (performances) + 102 (rehearsals)
- ⁶ \$46,500 + \$4,050 (rehearsals)
- ⁷ \$39,150 + approximately \$8,000 (rehearsals)
- ⁸ All musicians receive at least \$10/week overscale
- ⁹ 26 weeks of broadcasts at NPR rate plus 9% pension
- ¹⁰ Radio only
- ¹¹ Plus 7 relief services
- ¹² Plus 8 relief services for strings, 1st/2nd winds and brass, timpani
- ¹³ 11 weeks for strings & 2nd winds
- ¹⁴ 10 weeks for strings
- ¹⁵ 6-day relief period awarded if absent 32 or fewer services in prior season; additional vacation can be earned from Community Partnership services
- ¹⁶ 2002-03
- ¹⁷ One additional relief week for 2nd winds and 43 additional relief weeks shared among string section
- ¹⁸ 7 days for death or family emergency
- ¹⁹ 13 services maximum
- ²⁰ 4 of 6 sick days as personal days
- ²¹ 2 additional days for audition leave
- ²² 2 days (Opera); 2 services (Ballet/Show)
- ²³ 5 for strings (1 additional at discretion of management)
- ²⁴ 4 services (core), 2 services (long)
- ²⁵ 8 unpaid services on subscription sets; up to 50% of rehearsals and 50% of performances on non-subscription sets
- ²⁶ Based on seniority
- ²⁷ 3 days paid (against sick leave), 1 day unpaid

Thanks to SSD Contract Administrator Eric Beers for his help with the AFM Wage Chart data.

EMF Media Surveys Tallied

ICSOM Governing Board Member-at-Large Jay Blumenthal observed the tallying of ICSOM media surveys submitted to the AFM and filed the following report in late February.

Thirty-six orchestra surveys were tallied; fifteen orchestras did not respond. A majority opinion for each question was given a full point, an answer that was equally divided between two ratings received half a point, and answers divided equally into three received a third of a point. In the final tally, the data was looked at in the aggregate. There is no way of knowing how an individual orchestra felt except by going to that orchestra's survey.

Here are a few highlights (ICSOM results only):

- Twenty-five orchestras had made a CD in the past five years; nine had not. Rating the importance of increasing recording on a scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (not important), the majority (17) said 3. Asked to rate the importance of receiving all payments up-front for self produced recordings from radio and archival tapes on a the same scale of 1 to 5, twelve orchestras said 1, four said 2, ten said 3, four said 4, and five said 5.
- Asked if they would consider trading some up-front payments for royalty or revenue-based payments for self-produced recordings made from radio or archival tapes, 23 said yes and 12 said no. One national rate for self-produced recordings was favored by 12½, local control of minimum rates was favored by 10, and a sliding scale defined in a national agreement was favored by 11½.

As one can see, the numbers are very close, and their interpretation by the AFM and by the ICSOM Media Committee will surely necessitate much discussion.

[Ed: Regrettably, Jay was barred from observing the tally of the ROPA orchestras. Perhaps those results will be published elsewhere.]

AFM Convention Watch

As the AFM's biennial convention (to be held in Las Vegas June 23-25) approaches, the ICSOM Governing Board has submitted several resolutions to amend the AFM's Bylaws.

In accordance with a resolution passed by delegates to the 2002 ICSOM conference, we will submit, with the other four player conferences, a proposal to establish as AFM policy the inclusion of a rank-and-file orchestral musician as a trustee of the AFM Employees' Pension Fund.

We will also join with the other symphonic player conferences in proposing legislation that will bar contractors from serving on local boards.

Finally, we are concerned about legislation being proposed by one local (Canton OH) that would restrict the amount of subsidy for delegates' attendance at the annual meetings of the player conferences. We believe this proposal is seriously flawed, is unfair, and would greatly interfere with the effectiveness of our annual meetings.

Remembering Russell Brodine (1912–2003)

Russell Brodine, long-time member of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, died February 12 at the age of 91. According to the memorial service program, he was a musician, carpenter, woodworker, carver, remodeler, gardener, father, grandfather, friend, union organizer, political activist, mentor, and storyteller. Russell spoke at the ICSOM conference in 1989, and some of his writings were published in these pages, including a portion of his memoirs, Fiddle and Fight. Joe Kleeman, a member of the SLSO bass section from 1958 to 2001, related some of his memories of Russell Brodine to SLSO ICSOM delegate Tina Ward.

Russell Brodine had been assistant principal bass in the SLSO for about ten years when I arrived in 1958. He came when Vladimir Golschmann was music director. He loved to help people out, no matter what religion, race, creed—it didn't make any difference to him. If there was a problem he wanted to help.

My wife was in Columbia, Missouri, in medical school, and of course I was in St. Louis. He said, "Where are you going to stay? Come on, stay with me. I have a bedroom up here I'm not using and you can stay there for a few bucks a week. That way you don't spent a lot of money, and you spend more time with your wife." Stuff like that.

At that time we only had a 25-week season, and in the summer time you were left to fend for yourself. Most people would get a job here or there, but some families weren't so fortunate. What Russell liked to do was organize barbeques and have those families over. Of course, everybody made too much food and guess where the food had to go? He did it in a way that the families had some dignity—it wasn't a handout.

Dignity meant a lot to him. Anything to help people. Like the race problem—he was always active in it—get involved and make it better. He was very much for the underdog, and we were very much the underdogs in those days.

He was always trying to improve the music. He loved music. I'm not sure which he liked better, music or fighting. At a great performance, I'd sometimes see him crying. At that time, we'd have maybe four or five great performances a year. There was one performance—it was on a par with Chicago under Reiner—and I saw Russell shedding a couple of tears. He said, "I cry at births, I cry when somebody gets killed, and I cry at great performances."

When they were trying to get an orchestra committee here and the musicians were afraid to sign a petition saying that they wanted a committee, the principal flutist had the idea to take a letter into Golschmann and tell him that somebody wanted his autograph—and they did that and Golschmann signed the petition! When the musicians saw Golschmann's name on it, they all signed it, and that's how the orchestra committee got started. Golschmann was furious when he found out his name was on there.

Russell was always on the committee, and he couldn't understand why people wouldn't go to meetings. It was for their benefit and he couldn't understand why they didn't want to be counted. He fought for orchestras.

Principal bassist Henry Loew and I were at Russell's house, and Russell said, "We may have some stuff in our contract that other orchestras may want and they may have some stuff we want." We came up with the idea to ask people to send us their contract. We would send our contract to them, and then we started getting contracts back from all over the country. ICSOM hadn't been formed then. One of the things that we got into our contract at that time—we saw it in the New York Phil's contract—was to have a day off after arriving in Europe. In our negotiation we asked for two days off. The management said, "We'll give you one, but why even bring that up? We're not going to Europe." It's been in the contract ever since, and we use it. It was decades before the orchestra made its first European tour.

He liked the camaraderie of the bass section. We were very close and stuck together pretty much. One time we had a second-rate conductor from Russia. This guy was a terror. We had heard from Houston that he liked to run around the orchestra in rehearsals and shake his finger at individuals. So he's going through our orchestra getting in people's faces. When he gets to the basses, Russell hands his bass to his stand partner and points to the podium and says, "You see that little thing up there? That's where you belong. Don't get down here in the orchestra. You conduct from there. Get up there!" So the guy goes back to the podium and he's mad. He picks up his stool and throws it into the auditorium. Russell looks at him, picks up his bass stool and throws it into the auditorium. Russell says, "I threw mine farther. Do you want to have a competition, or do you want to make music?" That was the end of the whole thing—the guy never left the podium after that.

Houston Settlement Details

Term: April 1, 2003 - September 30, 2006

2002-2003: 50 weeks at \$1,425 (current wage) plus 2 weeks unpaid floating furlough (\$71,250 annually). This does not include the 3-week strike. The new settlement runs April 1-Sept. 30, 2003, with 24 weeks at \$1,425 plus 2 weeks unpaid furlough.

Oct. 1, 2003-Sept. 30, 2004: 49 weeks at \$1,425 plus 3 weeks unpaid floating furlough (\$69,825 annually)

Oct. 1, 2004-Sept. 30, 2005: 49 weeks at \$1,490 plus 3 weeks unpaid floating furlough (\$73,010 annually)

Oct. 1, 2005-Sept 30, 2006: 51 weeks at \$1,540 with 1 week unpaid floating furlough (\$78,540 annually)

These salaries include \$75 per week EMG.

Pension contributions (now 5%) will increase in the third year to 5.5% and in the fourth year to 6%. Musicians retiring under this agreement will receive any increases negotiated in next settlement.

Orchestra size remains at 97. Five string positions will be guaranteed but will not be filled during this agreement.

Per diem will paid when an afternoon rehearsal is followed by an evening performance.

The Society acknowledges musician sacrifice and agrees to improve finances to bring musician compensation to the median level of all full-time orchestras by the end of succeeding contract.

Members of the Society, the orchestra, and the community will hold meetings to discuss issues critical to Houston Symphony's future success. As an outgrowth of these meetings, a Mayor's Symphony Advisory Committee (MSAC) will be formed, composed of musicians, Society members, and concerned citizens appointed by the mayor. The MSAC is charged with advising the Houston Symphony Society toward ensuring the continued presence of a world-class orchestra in Houston, and it shall make quarterly progress reports to the mayor and the public. Musician representatives will assist in reaching Society fundraising goals, and monthly reports will be made to the MSAC.

2003 Sphinx Competition Winners

The sixth annual Sphinx Competition, which showcases top young African-American and Latino string players in the United States, was held February 11-19 in Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan. ICSOM Governing Board Member-At-Large Paul Ganson represented ICSOM and the Governing Board during this year's competition. As reported in the December issue of *Senza Sordino*, a portion of ICSOM dues is used to provide scholarship awards in the amount of \$500 to each of the senior winners.

This year's senior division winners are:

- Bryan Hernandez-Luch, First Place Laureate, 24, violin, West Valley City, Utah. Student of Isaac Malkin.
- Ryan Murphy, Second Place Laureate, 20, cello, Manchester, Missouri. Student of Stephen Geber.
- Mariana Green, Third Place Laureate, 24, violin, Boston, Massachusetts. Student of Stephen Clapp.
- Jennifer Arnold, 22, viola, North Royalton, Ohio. Student of Robert Vernon.
- Claire Garza, 21, viola, Cleveland, Ohio. Student of Jeffrey Irvine.
- Christopher Jenkins, 23, viola, Boston, Massachusetts. Student of Martha Katz.
- Shelby Latin, 21, violin, Rockford, Illinois. Student of Paul Biss.
- Aristides Rivas, 23, cello, Waco, Texas. Student of Gary Hardie.
- Karlos Rodriguez, 25, cello, Miami, Florida. Student of David Soyer.

Congratulations to all!

President's Report

(continued from page 2)

are the conduit between orchestras committees, the musicians they represent, and the Governing Board.

- Services of ICSOM Governing Board members, who communicate regularly with orchestras through their delegates and, when requested, meet in person as ICSOM Chairperson Jan Gippo and ICSOM Legal Counsel Leonard Leibowitz did during a recent trip to Houston.
- The AFM Symphony-Opera Orchestra Strike Fund, created in 1970 as a result of ICSOM initiatives, has disbursed over \$4 million to 46 different orchestras locked out or on strike.

Other services ICSOM musicians provide during difficult times include letters of support to fellow musicians, and strategically planned communications to newspapers, journals, and other media organizations to raise awareness of musicians' concerns and their orchestras' troubles. An excellent example of this was a letter written by Sam Bergman (Minnesota Orchestra) and published in the *Houston Chronicle* on March 16. Another highly effective and visible example of support and solidarity is when one ICSOM member orchestra performs publicly with a fellow orchestra on strike or locked out.

All ICSOM musicians owe their improved wages and working conditions, higher standard of living, and job security to those who have given of themselves during the past four decades. We have only to use our imagination and creativity to find other ways we as fellow musicians and union colleagues can continue to help each other. Often only a few musicians in orchestras volunteer their time and energy to improve the lives of their colleagues by serving on various committees, AFM local boards, and symphony boards. Imagine the tremendous impact possible if *every* musician took just a little time each week or month to become more involved with sustaining and improving our institutions. You may ask, "But what can I do? Can one musician really make a difference?" ICSOM's 41-year history demonstrates conclusively what is possible!

The world as we know it changes more and more every day. These changes permeate every aspect of our lives—economic, political, social, and cultural. We musicians can choose to become active participants in the discussions about the future of our orchestras and to use the tool of self-determination to ensure their viability. Or we can just sit by and let the rest of their world determine the fate of our orchestras without becoming involved to the fullest extent possible. "What," you may ask, "is the risk of just sitting on the sidelines?" The answer is the very future of our orchestras and, therefore, our livelihoods. I can think of no greater investment one can make than in our orchestras. Can you?

Conference Reminder

The 2003 ICSOM Conference will be held from August 20 to August 23 at The Antlers at Vail, Colorado. Additional information will be made available in future issues of Senza Sordino and via bulletin and Orchestra-L.

Urgent Appeal for Volunteers

The son of long-time New York City Opera ICSOM delegate Bruce Revesz is in need of a bone marrow (stem cell) transplant. If you would like to volunteer as a possible donor, a simple blood test is required. Please call the National Marrow Donor Program (US) at 1 (800) 627-7692 for information and testing location. You must be between the ages of 18 and 60 in order to be able to donate.

Houston

(continued from page 1)

We continued to become more organized and informed. We had excellent subcommittees on insurance, concerts, picketing, social functions, and community outreach. On St. Patrick's Day a large group of orchestra members and other musicians and families with signs marched in the downtown parade. Kit Reid, whose father had been in the orchestra for many years, led us with his Dixieland band. Next came a coffin and pallbearers. A large Houston Symphony sign stood atop the coffin.

During our 24-day strike individuals from our community took action and maneuvered both sides toward a settlement. Mayor Lee Brown stepped forward to appoint Houston developer Ed Wulfe as mediator for final negotiations. Mr. Wulfe brought in Alvin Zimmerman, attorney, former state judge, and high profile mediator. These gentlemen worked alternately with our negotiating team and the Houston Symphony Society team from Saturday, March 29, at 9:00 AM until late Sunday night, bringing forth a tentative agreement. The efforts of Mr. Wulfe and Mr. Zimmerman proved invaluable for the final phase of these negotiations, forging an agreement acceptable to both sides.

On Monday, March 31, the orchestra met for three hours to discuss and vote on the proposal. On April 1 ballots were counted and the proposal was approved. A news conference followed at Jones Hall.

Several major gains were made, and only because we went on strike. A long-term agreement with pay raises toward restoration is now in place; this was crucial for any hope for our future. The commitment to bring the musicians' salaries to the median level of all full-time orchestras, stated in a side letter, is a milestone. Another important first is the promise to raise the pensions of musicians who retire within this contract to the amount negotiated in the next contract. The establishment of a Mayor's Symphony Advisory Committee, allowing the Society's performance to be publicly scrutinized, is a huge win for us. (Ed. - Settlement details are on page 8.)

These past several months have been difficult for the musicians of the Houston Symphony. A substantial number of members, having lost confidence in the board and staff, left the orchestra. Several won auditions in other orchestras, and others went into other fields or retired. Resentment and mistrust will linger for a considerable time.

This contract had to contain concessions, but the new provisions gave the orchestra enough confidence to ratify it. Management was desperate for a settlement, since it could not very well announce a new season or raise money with its orchestra on strike. Our successful media campaign created intense scrutiny of their performance.

The musicians of the Houston Symphony wish to thank our Negotiating Committee (who worked longer than any other such committee in our history): Roger Kaza (chair), Chris French, Fred Edelen, Phil Stanton, and Eric Arbiter; our attorney, Susan Martin, who gave us the best in counsel, experience, and strategy; our spokesman and orchestra committee chairman, Dave Kirk, who worked around the clock during our public campaign; and our public relations firm, Varoga, Rice & Shalett (especially VRS's director of public affairs Joe Householder). We especially thank the officers of the Houston Professional Musicians Association, Local 65-699 AFM—President Lovie Smith-Schenk, Vice President Erica Robinson, Secretary-Treasurer Bob McGrew, and the Board of Directors—for their solid support and work on our behalf during this long campaign. President Smith-Schenk was present at both of the final marathon negotiation sessions!

And finally we thank our ICSOM Governing Board and our friends in orchestras across the country for their support, their letters, and their generous monetary help. You went a long way toward making us feel part of something very large and unified.

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A Conference of the American Federation of Musicians — AFL—CIO

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