

August 18, 1989
MEMORANDUM
[The Roehl Report]

To: Members of the Trade Division Committee: Dennis Dreith (RMA), Jane Owen (ROPA), Rosemary Estes (ROPA), Tom Hall (ICSOM), Brad Buckley (ICSOM), Carolyn Parks (ICSOM), Evelyne Robitaille (OCSM), Steve Sprague (AFM), and Richard Totusek (AFM)

From: William E. Roehl

My involvement with the AFM Player Conferences has been undertaken with the mutual understanding that I was to provide ideas and suggestions regarding options for the possible restructuring of player conferences in their relationship to the international union; to work within the perimeters of the constitution and bylaws of the AFM and in this process preserve the institutional integrity of the International.

Unions do not operate in a vacuum. All unions have been and will continue to be influenced by political forces, socioeconomic conditions, changes in the work force, and management's opposition to organizing. Every union is faced with these problems and many more. AFM is no exception. The hallmark of a great union is its willingness to communicate, to change, to address the genuine needs of its members and prepare for the next generation. I understand President Emerson and members of the International executive board have endorsed the concept of restructuring the player conferences in order for AFM to be even more effective in representing the membership in general and symphony and recording musicians in particular. The current AFM officers are to be commended for their efforts to address these issues in a positive manner and to rise above structural limitations and obsolescent attitudes shaped and needed in past generations.

We should bear in mind that in considering change we must have reasonable flexibility and avoid stereotyped copies of older forms and directions in order to meet the challenges of the ever increasing complexities of the musician's work world, while avoiding the mistake of discarding methods and forms of proven performance.

I am fully aware of previous meetings and discussions regarding the possibility of creating a trade division within the AFM. This brief explanation of intermediate bodies may be repetitious, but I feel that any logic for the formation of such bodies, e.g., a trade division, should be carefully reexamined and reevaluated.

Intermediate bodies are formed as reasonable and rational groupings to correct problems in the relationships between local unions or between locals and their international union. In most instances these bodies are utilized to achieve a common objective in collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining in a city or local labor market are often conducted by joint councils, e.g., Chain Councils (Brotherhood of Teamsters), Joint Boards (International Ladies' Garment Workers), District Councils (Brotherhood of Carpenters), District Lodges (Machinists Union), etc.

National intermediate bodies are used to coordinate bargaining interests with the membership or interests within the national union. Some are referred to as National Trade Divisions, Chain Councils (Teamsters) and Corporation Councils (Automobile Workers).

There are occupationally structured intermediate bodies which are national in scope, such as Skilled Trades Conferences, White Collar and Professional Conferences, Salaried and Technical Workers, etc. This type of intermediate body reflects and helps to reinforce a special interest group's identity in order to prevent its submergence within the national union.

Some intermediate bodies are developed to pool staff resources to enforce contracts and negotiate, thereby helping local unions that can not meet the demands put upon them because of their meager resources.

The structure of intermediate bodies in any international or national union inherently offers a means for mediating internal grievances. This mechanism provides a positive function that lessens the possibility of a secession movement.

The type and structure and reasoning behind the formation of these bodies vary in every situation where intermediate groupings exist. There must be the recognition that such structures in any international or national union should be developed with an understanding of the many forces that affect the union, such as the diversity of membership, in terms of growth or lack of growth, loss of membership, or growth potential. The "market environment" not only for conference members but for all members of AFM, must be a major consideration. We should also consider what is presently available and constitutionally established that offers access and service to all members.

At this time my perception and analysis of the Player Conference's needs and desires suggest the following:

- A more effective and cost-effective relationship between conferences and AFM, and between orchestras, recording musicians, and their local unions;
- A more institutionalized access to the AFM and the International Executive Board;
- More status within the AFM; and
- More input up to and possibly including supervisory power over a fully staffed AFM Symphony Department and Recording Department.

The above reflects a series of universal concerns included in Trade Division reports and voiced by conference officers with whom I have discussed the question of a trade division.

The ICSOM Trade Division Committee report dated August 1989, submitted by Tom Hall and Carolyn Parks, listed a number of general goals and specific objectives and reported that a number of those objectives have been obtained through convention action, e.g.

...that AFM bylaws be amended to allow player conferences to have non-voting representation at AFM conventions, including the right to appear before committees to defend legislation—(Because orchestra musicians are already represented by voting delegates from their local unions, voting status was not sought.); that each conference have three delegates, with expenses paid in accordance with AFM by laws; that all conferences have the right to introduce legislation; that all locals be required to provide to their orchestras the services guaranteed under the AFM Orchestra Program (OSP); that musicians, and not only the local, have a say in an orchestra being placed in the OSP.

Proposal

The following builds on the above-mentioned accomplishments and suggests ways of attaining additional objectives of the Trade Division Committee included in their report of August, 1989:

- The function and responsibilities of the Symphony Department and AFM's Orchestra Service Program are in fact and practice one and the same. The title of the Symphony Department should be changed to reflect this. A suggested title is Symphonic Services Division.
- The administrator of the Symphony Department and operating head of the Orchestra Service Program to serve as Director of the Symphonic Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President and to be designated by the president as assistant to the president.
- A Symphonic Steering Committee be established that would include the principal officer of ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM. This committee would serve as the advisory committee to the Symphonic Services Division.
- The title of the Recording Department should be renamed the Electronic Media Services Division.
- The administrator of the Recording Department to serve as Director of the Electronic Media Services Division, to be appointed to that position by the AFM President and to be designated by the president as assistant to the president.
- An Electronic Media Services Division Steering Committee be established that should be a small number of RMA officers to be determined in consultation with that conference, plus a media representative from the symphonic conferences.
- Change name of Summit Committee to Player Conference's Council. Maintain present composition of ICSOM, ROPA, OCSM and RMA.
- The Player Conference's Council would meet with the International Executive Board at a time and place mutually agreed upon. The purpose of the meetings would be to exchange information and ideas on appropriate subjects regarding the good and welfare of the American Federation of Musicians.
- The Structure Committee to continue its research into structural and operational improvements within the AFM, possibly including the submission of a detailed plan for a Trade Division.

The above suggestions are not submitted as the only avenue of approach. Others surely can be developed. Most of these suggestions are short-range goals and do not require convention approval.

Adoption of the above can reasonably be expected to advance the quest for the attainment of the goals outlined in the Trade Division committee's most recent report.

There is no "quick fix." Any long-term structural problems in the International in membership growth and perceived problems of the Player Conferences will not go away overnight. Drastic radical structural changes compressed into an immediate time sequence would be counter-productive to the interest of all the membership of AFM. These problems will change as a coherent program begins to develop.