

Senza Sordino

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Full Court Press: The Orchestra Newsletter

One of the many double-edged privileges of being an ICSOM delegate is receiving lots of reading material from other orchestras. Without question the most interesting documents from other orchestras that arrive in this delegate's mailbox are the newsletters that orchestra musicians publish themselves.

As the existence of the First Amendment demonstrates, the freedom of the press can be an incredibly powerful tool to bring about change. The desktop publishing revolution has made this incredibly powerful tool available to any person or group with a few hundred dollars and sufficient energy and time. The orchestra newsletter can be a potent weapon in an orchestra's battle to win respect in its community, hold its management and board accountable for the well-being of the institution, and maintain solidarity within its ranks.

There are three possible audiences for an orchestra newsletter. A newsletter can speak to the community of people who care about its survival, it can speak to the community as a whole and promote the orchestra and its musicians, or it can simply speak to those within the institution. Obviously, these three audiences are not mutually exclusive, but like most other human endeavors, the orchestra newsletter functions best when driven by a clear mission and purpose. This article will examine three examples of the art of the orchestra newsletter. They were chosen both because each has a different purpose and because many ICSOM delegates have ready access to them and can make them available to their orchestras.

Fireworks over Diamond Head

Perhaps the best known example of the orchestra newsletter as a genre, and certainly the best example this writer knows of the newsletter both as an organizing tool and a way of holding the power structure accountable to the community for its actions, is the newsletter of the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony, *The Bugle*. It was conceived originally as a way of keeping informed an orchestra that is widely dispersed over the mainland during the summer shutdown period, and began publication in March 1986, six months before the orchestra's 1986 strike. Marsha Schweitzer, Associate Principal Bassoon of the Honolulu Symphony and editor of *The Bugle*, describes its purposes as follows:

- to serve as the voice of the Honolulu Symphony Musicians (HSM) and to place the positions of the HSM on the record;
- to communicate with orchestra members during the off season;
- to inform musicians and the public of current events involving the Honolulu Symphony and/or its musicians;
- to provide an historical record of significant events over the years (useful when turnover within the institution is rapid and thus the institutional memory short);
- to set the record straight during times of confrontation.

Schweitzer claims that there are some other positive effects from publishing *The Bugle*. She feels that it serves to demonstrate that orchestra musicians are not merely note machinists, but creative intellects able to integrate language, analytic ability, and the graphic arts as well as music to benefit their communities, their orchestras, and themselves.

Another effect she feels is important is that *The Bugle* provides a degree of catharsis to the musicians, who see their point of view in print and widely distributed within the community as a whole. *The Bugle* presents the story of what is happening within the Honolulu Symphony in a way that the mass media are neither interested in, nor capable of, doing. This is especially important in a labor dispute, when the musicians are battling not only their board and management but often the entire power structure of the community, which usually includes the mainstream media outlets.

The contents of *The Bugle* will vary widely, depending on the

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Text by Robert Levine

Symphonic Ecology: The Demise of Orchestrus Rex

by Lucinda-Lewis

There is certainly no shortage of animals in danger of extinction these days. Wildlife advocates have difficulty keeping up with the growing list of endangered species. Unfortunately, there is one endangered species not found on any list; but then, it's not exactly an animal. Some refer to this species as a dinosaur whose evolution stopped years ago. In reality, the species is known as Orchestrus Rex, a large symphonic beast whose time of reckoning, according to some influential analysts, has come.

More than two hundred years ago, Orchestrus was transplanted from its more familiar Central European habitat, where it was loved and cared for by the populace and had an adequate food supply upon which to exist. European Orchestrus continues to thrive today. From the beginning, the North American Orchestrus attempted to exist as had its European ancestor. It quickly found a harsher environment and has been imperiled by a less caring populace and scant food supply. With a diet rich in high calorie money — state and federal art council grants, philanthropic and foundation gifts, and corporate donations — this once-regal beast has seen its food supply dwindle, and its keepers have begun to tire of the constant search for sustenance. There are those who would suggest that this archaic creature cannot be saved. Others posit that it can survive only if it can shrink in size, exist on less, and is able to adapt to its modern environment.

The American orchestra is undeniably in trouble. Whether it is actually facing extinction is debatable. Premature death notices have plagued the symphonic industry since the turn of the century, and yet orchestras continue to survive.

One of the earliest exposés of the financial problems of an American orchestra appeared in *Fortune Magazine* in 1935. The ominous headline, *Symphony Finance*, served as a caveat of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society's difficult financial condition: "Beethoven would be appalled to know. . . every time the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York performs his Fifth

Symphony, the cost is just under \$3,000 (\$32,319 in 1993 dollars) . . . of that amount, a round \$650 will be pure unadulterated deficit. Reduced to its lowest terms, the deficit means . . . every time anyone spends \$2 for a seat . . . in Carnegie Hall, he gets something that costs some \$3 to produce."

While the Philharmonic experienced success early on, it faltered for the first time in 1898, with the sudden death of its conductor Anton Seidl. Box-office reaction set in immediately and "a few years after the turn of the century, the Philharmonic went in the hole for the first time. It has been there ever since." By 1909, the Philharmonic was so deep in the waters of its deficit that a group of wealthy New Yorkers finally stepped in with help. Then, in 1911, the Philharmonic received a \$900,000 bequest from the estate of Joseph Pulitzer and immediately began to expand its season and touring. Everyone thought that Pulitzer's \$900,000 bequest (\$13,300,714 in 1993 dollars) would put the Philharmonic on easy street forever. Unfortunately, its deficits deepened, and the orchestra's wealthy guarantors found it increasingly difficult to make up the difference. Finally, in 1934, in the depths of the Great Depression, the Philharmonic was forced to turn to the public. The public appeal raised \$500,000 (\$5,520,773 in 1993 dollars) and kept the orchestra safe until 1937, but its underlying problems remained unsolved.

Paramount among the concerns of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society was the quality of the orchestra. All those associated with the Society insisted upon having the very best ensemble. Unfortunately, there seemed to be no way to accomplish that and achieve a balanced budget.

"Is there no way of bringing the Philharmonic's budget into actual balance? This budget actually represents a drastic pruning job," said *Fortune*. "Only by rigorous economy, then, has the Philharmonic made even this budget possible . . . Any further operation would inevitably cut too deeply into the most vital organ of all — the musicians' payroll. With smaller salaries it is extremely doubtful if the orchestra could hold its fine players. Most of them could increase their incomes right now if they were willing to leave symphony work for the more lucrative fields of broadcasting, popular records, and movie recordings."

Even in 1935, orchestras realized the need to expand the size of their paying audience. One possibility for increasing the audience was wired radio (developed by Bell Labs) in the home and in the concert hall. In the home, wired radio would resemble today's cable television, with subscribers paying extra for special radio concerts and static-free reception. In the concert hall an audience could hear

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Lucinda-Lewis is Principal Horn of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Secretary of ICSOM. The fact that she has been with the New Jersey Symphony for many years is not explained by the fact that she is not a violist.

Orchestra Rex

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a concert performed hundreds of miles away in another city over loudspeakers with special amplifiers and electrical equalizers. Of course, at the time, no one wanted to make any predictions about the financial potential of wired radio because “science had twice been seen coming to the financial rescue of orchestras — once with phonographs and again with radio broadcasts — and twice she has produced flops.”

According to Oliver Daniel’s *Stokowski*, all orchestras during the Great Depression had financial difficulties. In 1932, the Philadelphia Orchestra saw its subscriptions drop by 15%. “The alarmed board met and actually considered the dissolution of the orchestra.” In May, 1933, the musicians were asked to accept a 9% pay cut, but refused to cooperate in sharing the deficit. Eventually, the musicians did accept a small cut.

In 1970, the New York *Times* published an article (reprinted in the October 1993 issue of *Senza Sordino*) entitled “25 Symphonies Doomed To Die.” Among the twenty-five orchestras predicted to bite the dust during the 1970’s were: Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Louisville, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, and Seattle. The harbinger of this bad news was the Midwest Research Institute of Kansas City, which had studied the income/outgo of the aforementioned nine orchestras and concluded that “local philanthropy in the 1970’s will no longer be able to meet inevitably mounting deficits.” The report went on to state, in essence, that there was no way to save these orchestras.

Of the orchestras designated for demise in the Midwest Research Institute study, only the Kansas City Philharmonic no longer exists. (One wonders whether the effects of being entirely too close to a group of such positively-thinking consultants may have played a role in its demise. — *Ed.*) Even that one casualty of the failure of “local philanthropy . . . (to) meet inevitably mounting deficits” arose from the ashes a few years later in the phoenix-like form of the Kansas City Symphony.

In 1992, along came the Wolf Report. Commissioned by the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Wolf Report is a rather imposing document — a scientific-looking tome, with multiple volumes, charts, graphs, and crunched numbers, all of which describe a symphonic industry past its prime and in financial disarray. It has the look and feel of an economic impact study capable of describing the source of every dime of orchestral deficit. Dr. Thomas Wolf attempts to lend more credibility to his mighty opus by pointing to his musical lineage as a sure sign of his expertise, unlike the rest of us musical mongrels who have known all along that American orchestras are in trouble.

The Wolf Report clearly implies that symphony debt has been a crippling problem for only about the last twenty-five years and is

largely the result of collective bargaining. But according to *Fortune*, the New York Philharmonic was in serious financial trouble by 1909, long before its season became 52 weeks or before the musicians had quality medical or pension benefits, paid vacation, or indeed any employee benefits at all. The Wolf Report could have served to identify new solutions for the age-old problem of symphonic debt. Unfortunately, Dr. Wolf chose to round up the usual suspects and propose the same hackneyed solutions considered sixty years ago.

If we are to learn any lesson from our orchestral ancestors, it is that symphonies have historically spent more than they have earned, and that is the principal reason why orchestras exist in red ink. Of course, orchestras are hardly the only institutions in our society of which that is true; virtually all non-profit institutions granted non-profit tax-preferred status by the Internal Revenue Code, such as private schools and universities, museums, land conservancies, hospitals, and many other institutions, face the same ongoing problem. As a society, we have traditionally had difficulty understanding that non-profit organizations are neither businesses nor charities. They exist neither to make money for their owners nor to feed, clothe, and house their indigent employees. Rather, they exist to perform functions that society has deemed necessary but which, by their very nature, do not generate enough earned income to support the performance of that function.

There is no single reason for the disparity between spending and earning — many elements comprise the problem, and opinions are as numerous as the consultants. Dr. Wolf can place some of the blame on orchestra labor contracts, but the fact remains that musicians began to improve their lot through collective bargaining only about thirty years ago, while the symphonic “crisis” is more than eighty years old. We have seen several orchestras throw out their labor agreements and accept cutbacks in weeks and wages that have not resulted in the long-term financial stability of those orchestras, but only deteriorating artistic quality. The musicians of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra accepted draconian cuts, only to see their employer go belly-up and their collective bargaining agreement buried with indecent haste by a Federal court. Other orchestras have accepted concession after concession over the years, only to find their managements coming back to them with proposals for even deeper concessions that they swear will permanently solve the orchestra’s financial problems and “put the orchestra’s house in order.”

There is probably no one universal solution to orchestral red ink. Solutions to a symphony’s financial problems will be unique to each individual orchestra. The public, interestingly enough, never seems to be surprised to hear that its local symphony, ballet, or opera company is mired in the waters of red ink. In spite of that red

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Newsletter

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current relationship between the musicians and the management and board. "Sometimes," Schweitzer states, "*The Bugle* is directed mostly to the musicians, sometimes to the public, sometimes to the board. We know it's been effective when it makes the bad guys angry."

In addition to articles on the orchestra's situation, a calendar of chamber concerts involving Honolulu Symphony musicians appears in most issues (the November issue listed fourteen concerts). Hotline numbers and classifieds are also featured.

One feature of *The Bugle* that appeared on a regular basis before the current labor dispute was the "Progress Meter." Rather like the famous clock on the cover of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that measured the number of minutes before nuclear midnight, the Progress Meter was a large dial printed in each issue that measured the board's progress towards a given goal in a very graphic way.

Copy for *The Bugle* must be approved by the orchestra committee. The contents were reviewed by the musicians' local attorney at first, but Schweitzer said "our lawyer started to have absolute faith in us," and that step was dispensed with.

The Bugle was first produced using Schweitzer's typewriter and rubber cement. It is currently produced with PageMaker, a high-end desktop publishing application, on the local union's PC, with copy outputted to a laser printer. It is printed on the Local's photocopier at no charge to the musicians, although HSM provides the paper. It is published monthly and has a press run of approximately 3,000 copies. 200 copies are distributed in-house and 600 are distributed to those persons and institutions with a direct relationship to either the Honolulu Symphony or the HSM, such as unions, concert presenters, elected officials, and ICSOM and ROPA orchestras. The balance of the press run is distributed to schools, libraries, donors, the media, and interested citizens. Distribution is by mail, utilizing first-class mail for the in-house distribution and bulk mail for the rest of the distribution list, using the non-profit status of the local union to obtain the best postage rates.

Northwest Orientation

The musicians of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra have produced a newsletter, *Backstage*, for the past two years. It was designed, according to OSO percussionist and *Backstage* editor Christine Perry, as a way for the Orchestra Committee to unify and inform the members of the orchestra and to communicate with the board and hold them accountable for what goes on within the institution. The OSO musicians have had newsletters during previous work stoppages, but, according to Perry, *Backstage* is the first newsletter that was started prior to a labor dispute.

Backstage consists mainly of reports from the various musician committees, but also reports on the activities of the board committees on which musicians sit. In fact, musicians on board committees are required to make a report on every board committee meeting they attend, which has proven to be an effective way to both monitor the meetings and to encourage board-musician communication, especially as musician participation in OSO board committee meetings has just begun within the past year or so. Perry reports that after the musician representatives to one board committee reported that there **was** nothing to report, as the committee had not met for quite some time, the staff member assigned to that committee immediately scheduled meetings for the committee. Sometimes even the announcement of an upcoming article will cause staff activity on that subject; according to Perry, shortly after an announcement that an article would appear on the OSO's long-range plan in the next issue, management quickly requested a meeting to discuss the upcoming article, which led to management making a detailed presentation to the orchestra on the long-range plan.

In fact, Perry feels that the impact of the newsletter has been at least as great within management as it has been within the orchestra. It always seems to end up on the management bulletin board, and Perry received complaints from staff members when only one copy was given to the management, so now copies are distributed to the whole staff. This past summer *Backstage* was also distributed to the Board.

Perry said that, although the orchestra committee retains final approval of all copy, it has been helpful for people not on the committee to be involved in the production of the newsletter. When *Backstage* was first published, copy was not reviewed by an attorney, although once negotiations began, the contents of *Backstage* were reviewed by the musicians' counsel, Liza Hirsch Du Brul, before publication.

Backstage is published bimonthly on average. It is produced on a Macintosh, using PageMaker and a laser printer. One hundred copies are printed of each issue.

Staying Upbeat in Texas

The newsletter of the musicians of the Houston Symphony, *Upbeat*, differs dramatically from *The Bugle* and *Backstage* in almost every respect. Its genesis, according to Houston Symphony violist and editor Bernice Beckerman, was a video that was produced in the late 1980's to educate the general public about the musicians during a labor dispute. During the course of negotiations the musicians decided to expand and continue their education and outreach efforts by hiring two writers and publishing a newsletter, using what was

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left of the negotiations war chest as the core of a voluntary project fund to pay production and mailing costs. The first issue of *Upbeat* appeared in May 1989.

“When we started out, our purpose was to educate people, because most of the publicity that comes from management is about the Music Director or the guest artists; rarely is it about the orchestra, and even then only about the orchestra as a collective whole. We wanted to tell about the musicians as individuals,” said Beckerman. The first issues focused on the sections of the orchestra; the members of the sections were introduced and the role each section plays in the orchestra explained. “We also tried to bring in things about stress and the mental gymnastics we do,” Beckerman said. The role of orchestra members in music education in the community has also been emphasized.

A regular feature of *Upbeat* has been a series of back-to-back profiles of an orchestra member and some other person connected with the orchestra, such as a member of the board or a reporter on tour with the orchestra. The most recent issue of *Upbeat*, for example, featured profiles of David Wax, Executive Director of the Houston Symphony and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Symphony Orchestra League, and Dick Schaffer, second trumpet of the Houston Symphony and a member of the Board of Directors of the Houston Professional Musicians Association, Local #65-699, AFM. Another regular feature has been a column featuring activities, both musical and non-musical, of Houston Symphony musicians.

Upbeat was initially published monthly, but after six months went to a bimonthly schedule, and eventually to its current quarterly schedule. Last year, according to Beckerman, “we discovered that nobody understood what we did as well as we do, so we started writing and producing it ourselves.” In addition to Beckerman and violist Tom Elliot, who produces the newsletter on his computer, there is a newsletter committee of five musicians who decide on the contents of each issue and who have final approval over the contents.

2,500 copies of *Upbeat* are printed per issue. It is mailed to donors who give over \$500 to the Houston Symphony, long-term season ticket buyers, members of the media, elected officials from the Houston area, various orchestra managements, ICOSM delegates, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and others. It is mailed under the Houston Symphony non-profit mail permit, although the postage is paid by the musicians. Because of this arrangement, management does see *Upbeat* before it is mailed, although, according to Beckerman, they have never attempted to censor the contents of the newsletter. If they did, she said, “we’d mail it on our own.”

Upbeat is produced on a Macintosh using PageMaker, and printed at a local print shop. The total cost of each issue, including printing, postage, and mail house services, is between \$2,000 and \$2,500. Funds come from an internal project fund, to which approximately three-quarters of the orchestra make voluntary contributions through payroll deductions, and from donations from people who receive *Upbeat*.

Beckerman feels that *Upbeat* has succeeded in raising the level of knowledge about the orchestra in the community and especially within the Houston Symphony board, and has enhanced the image of the musicians as people concerned with the future of the orchestra. She says that they have received a number of letters of support from board members and others. “The fact that we are willing to spend our own money to produce something that creates a positive image of the orchestra has certainly helped. Having just come out of an era of freezes and cuts, we can remind the Board that we did our part,” she said.

How to Stuff a Wild Newsletter

Probably the single most important factor in determining whether a newsletter will be successful is the editor. The most important requirements for an editor are enthusiasm, energy, judgment, and the trust of the orchestra committee. It is not necessary for the editor to be either the orchestra’s resident computer geek or the best writer among the musicians, although it will be helpful to enlist both writers and wireheads, especially as the latter will most likely be the people with the necessary hardware and software to produce the newsletter.

The most important procedural issue to settle is who has final approval over the newsletter’s contents. This obviously depends on the goal of the newsletter, but whatever the goal, asking a lawyer to check the newsletter for material with possible legal consequences should be considered very seriously. A libel suit will have the approximate effect on the editor’s life and finances of a cruise missile exploding in the back yard, and is something devoutly to be avoided.

The other key decision, both in terms of the newsletter’s goal and its budget, is the size and nature of the distribution list. Printing lots of copies of a newsletter, whether at a union print shop or on your home copier, is relatively inexpensive. Mailing lots of copies is not. If the purpose of the newsletter requires wide distribution, then serious investigation should be undertaken about postage rates for non-profit organizations, as well as the costs and benefits of using a mail house. Don’t assume that the only way to mail your

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Letters to the Editor

I am disturbed by Bradford D. Buckley's condemnation of the American Symphony Orchestra League's study regarding the American symphony orchestra today. It sounds like he felt he was "left out."

The task force of the *Americanizing the American Orchestra* report represents some of our most respected colleagues. I would like to see you report their side of the story. You spend almost three pages of an eight page periodical on Mr. Buckley's viewpoint without giving space to what may possibly be constructive guidelines for orchestras in trouble.

I would also like the American Symphony Orchestra League be given an opportunity to respond to Samuel Lipman's view of their validity and to your description of them as a "Death Star."

Maybe a synopsis on *Americanizing the American Orchestra* should be given to your readers (ICSOM members) so that they may form their own opinion.

After all, they state in their introduction ". . . the Task Force urges everyone who cares about orchestras to read on and to think about what they have read, discuss it, argue about it, agree or disagree with all of it or part of it, and then take some action in whatever way they can. The music is too beautiful, the people too talented and dedicated, and the institutions too important not to make our best effort to sustain and nurture them for the generations to come."

Or shall we just trash the Task Force and the ASOL?

BRUCE PATTI
Dallas Symphony

Brad Buckley replies:

Mr. Patti seems to have missed the point of my recounting of the sequence of events that led ICSOM and our colleagues in the Regional Orchestra Players Association (ROPA) to choose not to participate in a forum leading to the release of *Americanizing the American Orchestra*. I did not feel "left out," as Mr. Patti claims; the point is that we came to an agreement with the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL) concerning our participation in an issue forum, and the League could not (or would not) fulfill their part of the agreement.

Our concerns about the funding of the process by the League and the rewriting of the issue forum reports by the ASOL Steering Committee have been amply borne out by the firestorm of criticism from many quarters (including musicians who participated in the issue fora) which engulfed *Americanizing the American Orchestra* upon its release. As for Mr. Patti's wish to see ICSOM present the League's point of view, I'm sure that he is aware that the League has its own periodical. It is neither necessary nor appropriate for ICSOM to proselytize on behalf of the ASOL.

Coda

DANIEL MAJESKE

For nearly twenty-one years, I have sat on the opposite side of the stage from Daniel Majeske. I have been listening, watching, and admiring this fine man as he went about his task as concertmaster of our great orchestra.

Dan passed away on November 28, and the wonderful memories that I have of this consummate artist are ones I will cherish forever. His integrity as a musician and a human being was an example for all. He was an honest and loyal man that one could depend on and look up to, both on and off the concert stage.

We will miss Dan very much, but I am so thankful for these past years together.

Stephen Geber
Cleveland Orchestra

MARGARET HAWKINS

Margaret Hawkins, founder and director of the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, died of cancer on November 13.

Margaret was a woman of immense knowledge, great musicality, wicked wit, profound personal warmth, and overwhelming emotional honesty. The singing of her wonderful choir perfectly reflected her personality. She played a role within the Milwaukee Symphony that could not be found or even described on an organization chart, and her many friends in the orchestra mourn her passing very deeply.

Robert Levine
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

Letters

continued

Actions speak louder than words, and the League's actions, which have done so much to present a negative view of the American symphony orchestra, certainly contrast sharply with their statement that "the people (are) too talented and dedicated and the institutions too important not to make our best effort to sustain and nurture them for the generations to come."

Senza Sordino would like to note, as Mr. Patti did not do so in his letter (the only correspondence that we have received regarding Buckley's speech), that his brother, Douglas Patti, is Director of Management Services for the ASOL. — Ed.

Newsletter

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newsletter is in an envelope with a 29¢ stamp stuck on it; it may not even be the easiest way.

Newsletters can be produced with equipment as low-tech as pen and carbon paper. It is more likely, though, that the orchestra aspiring to produce its own newsletter will want to join the desktop publishing revolution and do it on a computer. With prices for computer hardware continuing to fall as fast as a second-year Music Director's reputation, it now cost less than \$1,500 to purchase a desktop publishing system complete with high-resolution printer and software. Of course, most orchestras have members who already have the necessary hardware; all that may be required is convincing one of them to join the newsletter committee. Another option is to purchase used equipment; depending on where one shops, it is possible to put together a perfectly functional system for half the price of new equipment.

Desktop publishing is one area of personal computing where the Macintosh has not only been technically superior to the PC, but has dominated the market as well. However, there is now some very good software that allows the PC user to produce high quality newsletters. Programs suitable for producing newsletters of considerable complexity, such as Aldus Personal Press, can be purchased for under \$100. Often the software will come with templates for newsletters of various formats, thus easing the design task for the newsletter novice.

Printing a high quality newsletter used to require the services of a typesetter, but can now be done on a high-resolution inkjet printer costing under \$300. An alternative route to high resolution output might be a local copy shop with self-service laser printers available at a per-page rate. Camera-ready copy produced on a high-resolution printer can then be taken to a union print shop for offset printing or photocopying.

By way of comparison, *Senza Sordino* is produced on a Macintosh Centris 610 using PageMaker. Proofs are printed on an inkjet printer, while final copy is printed to film at a local service bureau using an imagesetter at a resolution of either 1200 dpi (dots per inch) or 2400 dpi. The film is then taken to a union print shop, where 5,700 copies are printed, for a total production cost (before mailing) of between \$700 and \$800 per issue.

Further Reading

The desktop publishing revolution has led to a barrage of books on the subject, and new ones come out daily. An useful guide to traversing the the legal minefields associated with publishing is *The Desktop Publishers' Legal Handbook*, by Daniel Sitarz (ISBN #0-965755-02-0). A style manual is also very helpful to the cub editor; *Words into Type*, by Marjorie Skillin (ISBN #0-13-964262-5), is regarded as a classic.

Orchestra Rex

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sea, communities seem to want to keep their symphonies, ballet, and opera companies, and there are musicians, boards, and managements who will make heroic efforts to save their institutions. It seems to have become almost a ritual, and our collective lack of business skills is as much a tradition as a flaw. Consider this amusing exchange from the 1936 film, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, starring Gary Cooper in the title role. Mr. Deeds has inherited \$20 million from his uncle. The board of directors of the opera has just elected Mr. Deeds to be its chairman, and the newly elected chairman wants to hear the treasurer's report:

Treasurer:	The Treasurer reports a deficit of \$180,000.
Mr. Deeds:	A deficit . . . You mean we lost that much?
Board Member:	You see, Mr. Deeds, the opera isn't conducted for profit.
Mr. Deeds:	It isn't? What's it conducted for?
Board Member:	It's an artistic institution. The opera isn't conducted like ordinary business.
Mr. Deeds:	Why not?
Board Member:	Because it just isn't a business!

Mortgage as Missive

The American Federation of Musicians, through its affiliation with the AFL-CIO, offers a program that should be of interest to orchestra musicians approaching negotiations in this era of collective bargaining hardball; the Union Privilege® mortgage program. Not only does this program offer what appear to be competitive rates for financing or refinancing a home, but strike and welfare fund benefits are available as well. The Union Privilege® mortgage program will pay one-half of the principal and interest payments starting in the fourth month of a strike or lockout, and all of the principal and interest payments starting in the seventh month of a strike or lockout for the next three months. There are also disability benefits, special help for first-time buyers, and some discounts on buying and selling a home if done through an affiliated real estate broker. Some restrictions do apply, most notably a minimum period of union membership of one year before the program will pay any part of the principal and interest during a work stoppage.

Not only is this still a good time to refinance, but imagine the look on the face of your orchestra's Finance Director when she finds ninety requests on her desk for salary information from a mortgage provider that pays strike benefits. A better example of doing good by doing well could scarcely be imagined.

For more information, call 1-800-848-6466.

News that Fits

The AFM Pension Fund has a new Administrator. Delores Thrower comes to the Pension Fund from her current position as Assistant Administrator and Controller of the Directors Guild of America – Producer Pension and Health Plans. She spoke at a membership meeting of the Recording Musicians Association in Los Angeles recently and described her goals for the Pension Fund as the following:

- revamping the AFM Pension Fund computer system;
- making the staff more responsive;
- improving communications with plan participants;
- making Pension Fund documents easier to understand.

Ed Peters, former Pension Fund Administrator, will remain on as an advisor to Ms. Thrower, and will also continue as Administrator of both the Motion Picture and Phonograph Special Payments Fund. ICSOM looks forward to working with Ms. Thrower.

A Presidential Advisory Committee, consisting of the presidents of the five largest AFM locals and representatives of RMA and ICSOM, has been established to advise President Mark Tully Massagli on a range of topics, including finance and the structure of the Federation. ICSOM Chair Brad Buckley will represent ICSOM on the Committee. Buckley and ICSOM President David Angus will also be meeting with the International Executive Board of the

Federation and with the other trustees of the AFM Strike Fund in late December. Buckley will also be meeting with the other members of the Symphonic Services Division Steering Committee and the other members of the Electronic Media Services Steering Committee.

Low Waldeck, head of the AFM Symphonic Services Division, has submitted his resignation to President Mark Tully Massagli, but has agreed to remain until a replacement is hired. Lew has become a legend amongst musicians committed to the labor movement, and this writer hopes that the dogs and ponies for which Lew is justly famous will continue to inspire orchestra musicians for many years to come. Mazel tov, Lew.

ICSOM has agreed to pay a portion of the legal costs incurred in litigating a recent ruling by the Internal Revenue Service, which could apply to orchestra musicians nationally, disallowing instrument depreciations claimed by two members of the New York Philharmonic, Richard and Fiona Simon. Arguments in Federal Tax Court in early December featured a performance by the Simons of the third movement of the Bach double violin concerto. A ruling is expected in approximately three months. An article on the case appeared in the New York *Times* on December 7.

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