

Senza Sordino

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THE PHILADELPHIA STORY: EAST MEETS WEST

By IRVING SEGALL, Philadelphia Orchestra

On the morning of Sept. 10, as I boarded the 707 that was to take the Phila. orchestra to Peking, China, my emotions ran the gamut from feverish excitement to extreme apprehension. I was excited at the prospect of this extraordinary trip, but I was apprehensive as to how we would be received at the person to person level, as working musicians from the United States. After all, prior to President Nixon's visit to China less than two years ago, every red-blooded American was led to assume that China was an enemy nation just waiting for a pregnant opportunity to do us in. I assumed that the Chinese propaganda machine had done a similar job, but in reverse, on the Chinese people. So here we were, strings, brass, woodwind and percussion, going in to test the water.

We found the water to be positively refreshing, if not absolutely exhilarating, thanks in no small part to the music and musicians of the Central Philharmonic Society of Peking. We first met them the day after our arrival, at an afternoon concert to which we were invited. They are the real heroes of this story, not only because their music and musicianship (more of this later), but because we were able to establish a bond of friendship based primarily on a mutual profession. And through their hospitality and friendship, we were able to learn about the music and musicians of China.

The Central Philharmonic Society of Peking is conducted by Li Teh-lun. He is a former cellist, and studied conducting at the Moscow Conservatory. The Society consists of 100 players, 10 of whom are women. Of the 100, 10 play traditional Chinese instruments, and the balance play western symphony orchestra instruments. They play an average of 8 concerts per month, and have 4 rehearsals of 4 hours each, for each concert. About 70 players play on a rotating basis. There is one month vacation each year. Due to the rigors of language interpreters, I'm not certain whether it is this vacation month, or another month of the year, when each player is required to work in an agriculture commune, or a factory. This is to keep him in touch with the workers and peasants, and is required of all people in the performing arts throughout China.

Salary ranges from 60 to 120 Yuan per month. (One Yuan equals about \$.50 U.S.). Salary depends on length of service, quantity and quality of work, and family size. Larger families receive larger income. However, beyond the second child, the income goes down. This is to discourage large families in a country of 800,000,000 people: Twenty-five percent of the world's population lives in China! In addition to salary, orchestra members live with their families in a complex of six buildings near the concert hall. Rent is about 5% of salary, and 50% of the family's food bill is paid for by the Society. Education is free, as is medical and dental service. Retirement age is 65 for men and 55 for women, at 80% of salary. Service beyond retirement age is optional but is subject to the approval of the organization committee and the orchestra members. Some instruments are individually owned, and some are owned by the Society, however all supplies and repairs are paid for by the Society.

The orchestra does tour. They perform in factories, mills, mines, army installations, agricultural communes, as well as concert halls. They bring the music to where the people work. The music is played for soldiers, workers and peasants, and must be

music that they can understand and identify with, it was explained. All of the music performed, whether it be performed on traditional instruments, sung, or played on western instruments, is either folk music, music inspired by a political idea, or music dedicated to work and workers. For example, on the program which we first heard, some titles were: Young Guard, Song For Motherland, The Red Flower of Ta-chai Blooms Everywhere, Patrol On The Grasslands, Delivering Public Grain Joyfully, The Red Army Has Come Back, and finally, five poems of Chairman Mao set to music.

Some musicians have been trained in Europe, but most have studied in China. The orchestra rehearses the programs it is to perform, which is always the music described above, and never western classical symphonic repertoire. Never. However, the orchestra does rehearse the classical repertoire, but only for improvement of orchestral discipline, not for performance. The performance of these works, it is felt, would develop an audience of "elitists", and that is frowned upon. As a matter of fact, the recent "Cultural Revolution" occurred to stop the trend to intellectual elitism in Universities and other similar institutions. All of the performing arts including dancing and so called "opera", are geared to inspire political consciousness among the people.

The traditional music has, in some instances, an eastern European flavor, in addition to its peculiar Chinese characteristic, and one wonders, in development, who influenced whom. The music written more recently (post liberation or revolution) is cliché ridden harmonically, and comes off like fifth rate Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff. However, the quality of the performance is quite high, and especially sensitive. I heard no bad musicianship from players of either traditional instruments, singers, or orchestral instruments. All the playing was first class, sensitive, and above all, musical.

We saw a performance of a ballet in Shanghai, "The White Haired Girl". The term ballet is used loosely. It was really a multi-media work with dancing, singing and acting. The sets were beautiful, using film and slides together with traditional back drops. The dancing was both classical ballet in part, and modern dance. All the dancing was excellent. The pit orchestra was outstanding. Altogether it was first rate theatre. The story tells of a tenant farmer who must sell his daughter to the landlord for back rent payments, and she escapes from his clutches and runs off into the mountains where she meets up with the Red Army. She joins with them in the fight for liberation and everything then becomes peaches and cream. For we Westerners, the story is the weakest link in these works. But to the Chinese people, this is the most realistic. When the girl's father resists the landlord taking his daughter, the Chinese audience began to cheer. It reminded me of our old cowboy and Indian westerns, when, as naive children, we would cheer whenever the cowboys "got" one of the Indians.

Our orchestra was in the company of the members of the Central Philharmonic on several occasions. We took several sight seeing trips with them, and spent an entire afternoon visiting with them at their rehearsal hall. We visited with our counterparts in their orchestra.

(Continued on page 4)

MONTREAL SOLVES FINANCIAL DILEMMA

The Montreal Symphony Orchestra, like other major Canadian orchestras, receives a larger proportion of its operating funds from government sources than other North American Orchestras. During the 1973-74 season, the Federal government of Canada contributed (through the Canada Council) \$484,000 to the M.S.O.; the government of the Province of Quebec gave \$245,000 and the Arts Council of Greater Montreal added \$160,000. This made a total of \$889,000 towards an annual budget approximating 2.5 million dollars. However, in spite of these impressive demonstrations of support, the M.S.O. recently found itself in a disastrous financial state.

On November 28, 1973, the President of the Board of Directors of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Robert J. Bruck, announced that as of December 20th, 1973, the Orchestra would discontinue operations due to financial difficulties. The problem, as outlined by Mr. Bruck, included the cancellation of the Orchestra's credit by the Banque Canadienne Nationale due to an increasing deficit in the neighborhood of \$600,000 and the placing of the City of Montreal on the American Federation of Musicians' black list because of a jurisdictional dispute not directly involving the Orchestra. This dispute caused the cancellation of the grant by the Montreal Arts Council. Mr. Bruck also mentioned "mistakes" made by Management, which accounted for \$150,000 of the deficit. He also referred to an unprofitable summer season and increasing orchestra salaries. *In reality, the mistakes on the part of Management accounted for nearly twice this stated figure and the summer season had been the most profitable on record.* The orchestra salaries should not have been a major issue, since most of the players were in the third year of multi-year personal agreements which should have been budgeted for by Management.

The orchestra players responded to this news with disbelief, shock and in some cases disgust, but everyone immediately decided to do everything possible to help keep the orchestra alive. The public reaction and that of the press, with a few exceptions, was immediate and massive moral support to the plight of the orchestra.

In spite of this, many days went by without any tangible measures having been taken. The eve of the deadline of December 20th arrived without news of any real solution.

Mr. Bruck had one approach to the problem: he was placing the package on the doorstep of governments. The Federal government was not at liberty to contribute funds to the M.S.O., because they did not want to set a precedent of deficit spending and were already the orchestra's largest donor, giving \$484,000 annually. The Municipal government had its hands tied because of the above-mentioned union dispute. This left the onus squarely on the Provincial government.

The orchestra members did not want to interfere with the excellent use of brinkmanship that the Management had employed, therefore, the musicians refrained from making any comments other than backing up the Management's position. The orchestra players organized methods of petitioning the governments and helped to obtain 30,000 signatures from private individuals that were sent to all three levels of government.

The public was deeply concerned about the possible demise of their orchestra and demonstrated their support in many ways. Construction workers building the new Metro extension, passed a hat and came up with about \$150,000. Montreal taxi drivers assisted in collecting petition signatures. All four of the city's major newspapers were swamped with letters to the editor. Business pledged percentages of their sales on a given day to the M.S.O. A benefit concert, raising \$70,000, was organized by the orchestra using some of the top Canadian artists, who donated their services. It was a gratifying experience to see so many people concerned about music.

The financial crisis of the M.S.O. was finally resolved by a combined effort on the part of two levels of government, the private sector and the Musicians' Union.

Immediately after the initial press conference at which bankruptcy was declared as of December 20th, the Quebec Government had made statements to the effect that they would save the orchestra, but only at the very end did they actually specify an exact financial amount. It would appear they were waiting to buy "orchestra stock" at the lowest price. In other words, they wanted to bail out the orchestra for the smallest amount of money necessary and at the same time to gain some control of policy making.

As previously stated, the Federal government did not increase its existing grants.

On the suggestion of Quebec Labor Minister, Mr. Jean Cournoyer, the Musicians' Guild of Montreal removed the City of Montreal and Mayor Jean Drapeau from its unfair list, thus restoring the \$160,000 Montreal Arts Council's grant. In addition, the public of Montreal donated in excess of \$500,000 for the coming season and five years guaranteed grants of at least \$100,000.

We hope that a crisis of this nature would also have a positive side by demonstrating the scope of public support that can be generated for an orchestra. *However, it is also true that this type of crisis could be averted with thoughtful and imaginative management.* It is the sincere hope of the players of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra that no other North American Orchestra be subjected to the worry and embarrassment this type of crisis could incur.

Larry Combs and Michael Leiter
Montreal Symphony Orchestra

UNITED FRONT AND SKILLFUL NEGOTIATING AVERT STRIKE IN CLEVELAND

It's all over! It happened near midnight, January 27th, an irrevocable deadline set by the orchestra members. In a negotiation cliffhanger the Musical Arts Association made a proposal to the Cleveland orchestra members which was acceptable. The basic settlement calls for:

- Sept. 3, 1973 to Mar. 3, 1975, \$300 a wk. (\$15 increase)
- Mar. 3, 1975 to Mar. 3, 1976, \$315 a wk. (\$15 increase)
- Mar. 3, 1976 to Mar. 3, 1977, \$350 a wk. (\$35 increase)

All increases are across the board, with retroactivity to commencement of the present season.

Payment by management of the Health and Welfare package for both musician and dependents will commence Mar. 3, 1975.

A non-contributory pension, reconstructed and improved, will include return of past contributions by the musicians.

Vacation. 6—6—7 weeks.

Per Diem: \$31—\$32—\$33. For both foreign and domestic tours.

Because of the widespread interest in the Cleveland struggle, and the many interesting developments in the course of the discussions, a complete issue of SENZA SORDINO will be devoted to this subject in March.

Those orchestra members who so desire, may make contributions to:

THE DAVID SMILEY MEMORIAL EDUCATION FUND
c/o Dr. Gordon Tomkins
5 Eugene St.
Mill Valley, Calif. 94941

A STUDY IN UNITY

A striking victory of a kind that can only be achieved by a unified orchestra has just been won in St. Louis. In this case, the development of unity behind one musician in his struggle with management not only won a victory for him, but established a precedent for requiring respectful and responsible treatment of all musicians, and especially of older musicians. This outcome is in strong contrast to the mistreatment of Francis Henrickson in Atlanta, reported in the August issue of *Senza Sordino* ("A Study in Calumny").

Russell Brodine is a 60-year-old bass player with 24 years of service to the St. Louis Symphony, 23 as assistant principal. He has always been active in orchestra concerns and has served a number of terms on the Orchestra Committee and on the Dismissals Committee. Last winter he was notified of a demotion to take effect with the 1973-74 season, although with no diminution of pay. Age seemed to be the crucial motivation of the action.

Our bass section is one of the most stable sections in the orchestra. There have been no changes in many years. They know the



The St. Louis Orchestra bass section—First Row, left to right: Henry Loew (Principal), Terry Kippenberger, Warren Claunch, Janice Roberts.

Second Row, left to right: Bob Maisel, Joe Kleeman, Russell Brodine (Ass't Principal), Richard Muehlmann, Don Martin.

advantages of continuity and have a well-deserved reputation for the ensemble that has developed over the years. There had been nine bass players for some time, due to the return of one man from the service. This is one more than the management wished to retain and pay.

The bass section regarded the demotion of Brodine as completely uncalled for. *Each and every one refused to consider moving up to Brodine's position.* Audition notices were twice posted but there were no takers. Management then threatened to hire a new assistant principal and fire two bass players in addition to demoting Brodine, but the unity remained unbroken. As the winter season approached its end with the bass section still firmly together, official dismissal notices were issued to two bass players, effective at the end of the 1973-74 season.

At this point, a special emergency meeting of the entire orchestra was called during intermission on the morning of a double rehearsal day. *The orchestra unanimously voted not to*

resume rehearsal until arbitrary and unfair actions of management were rescinded.

The stoppage ended four hours later. Resumption of the afternoon rehearsal was made possible by these management actions:

1. The two bass dismissals were rescinded.
2. Another dismissal of an older but highly qualified and capable string player was rescinded.
3. Brodine was promised his contract as assistant principal or an advantageous early retirement plan.
4. The Executive Director apologized to the whole orchestra for his handling of the situation.

Subsequently, Brodine chose to accept the retirement arrangements. He will receive for life the monthly payments called for in our pension plan in the case of early retirement. In addition, for the next five years (until his normal retirement date) the Symphony Society will provide an additional payment, bringing his annual income close to what he received during the 1972-73 season, and will continue to provide medical coverage during those five years. At his final concert, Brodine received an enthusiastic ovation from orchestra and audience.

Now as never before, each Symphony Society must come to know that to have fine musical performances, the musicians must be dealt with in a more responsible manner. We musicians of the St. Louis orchestra know that unity is the ingredient that will insure great progress. *This is our answer to calumny.*

Today there exists in the St. Louis Symphony a will and a community of purpose that are unbeatable.

SYRACUSE NEGOTIATES A TRANSITIONAL CONTRACT

On November 10, the members of the Syracuse Symphony voted, 53 to 1, to accept a four-year contract which will move the orchestra from a part-time to a full-time operation. The fourth year of the contract will coincide with the opening of a hall for the orchestra in Syracuse's new Civic Center now being constructed. In the 1972-73 season the scale for a core orchestra player was \$3,960.00 for 33 weeks. This will move to \$8,200.00 for 39 weeks plus two weeks paid vacation and total health insurance coverage for the player in 1976-77. The weekly rate will be \$138 per week for 33 weeks plus 1 week vacation in 1973-74; \$154 per week for 34 weeks plus 1 week vacation in 1974-75; \$172 per week for 35 weeks plus 2 weeks vacation in 1975-76; and \$200 per week for 39 weeks plus 2 weeks vacation in 1976-77.

In June of this year, after eight months of negotiating and absolutely no sign of progress on a new contract, the players voted to retain Sipser and Liebowitz as counsel. On September 17 the orchestra opened the 1973-74 season without a contract on a play and talk basis. Play and talk continued for 8 weeks with players contributing 10% of every pay check to a strike fund which reached a substantial sum by the time an agreement was reached. We feel that the gains that we have made are due primarily to the unity that the players have shown in their determination to make the orchestra a full-time operation.

A unique event which moved negotiations from a standstill to real negotiating was a meeting on October 16 of the entire board of directors of the Association and all orchestra members. The meeting was held at the request of the board for an exchange of information as to the causes of the stalemate we had reached. The result of the meeting was a unanimously accepted resolution for negotiating teams to meet and hammer out a package free of all restrictions by board or players. The resulting package was then presented to both board and players for approval.

George Teufel
Syracuse Symphony Orchestra

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(Continued from page 1)

I found the violists to be like violists the world over; very interested in their instrument and in music, and generally well balanced and wonderful human beings. They asked us to look at their instruments and make suggestions as to how they might be improved. We found the bridges to be thick and improperly fitted, and the strings of inferior quality. We promised to send some strings from the U.S.A. We also exchanged some small gifts with each other, such as a picture post card, a coin, or a ball point pen.

On the last day in Peking, the Chinese musicians came to the airport to see us off to Shanghai. I received a post card as a gift. On the back of the card, my violist friend had written in Chinese and English, "long live the people's friendship between America and China". I expressed my "Amen" as best I could, and couldn't help think that possibly the old saying, "music speaks an international language" should be changed to "musicians speak an international language".

N. CAROLINA INKS ONE YEAR PACT

On October 22, 1973, the membership of the North Carolina Symphony accepted the contract package recommended to them by the Orchestra Committee. Our new contract is for the period of one year and provides for a season of 31 weeks with a minimum salary of \$187.50 per week for section players and \$212.50 per week for principals. Vacation is for two weeks with pay. The per diem was raised to \$9.00 a day, with the Symphony Society continuing to provide double rooms at no cost to the musicians.

Instrument insurance paid in full by the Symphony Society was instituted and the Society's contribution towards our major medical plan was increased from \$5.50 to \$10.00 per person for each month of the season.

Other improvements included a temperature clause, an improved and clarified sick leave and disability clause, more limitations on travel and service length, and clarification of our recording and taping article which had been in conflict with the A.F. of M. Bylaws.

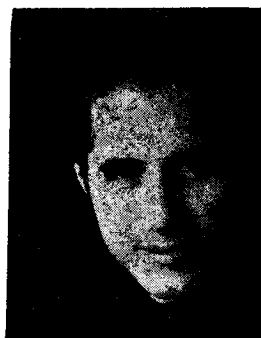
Although we are still one of the lowest paid orchestras in ICSOM, this represents in increase in yearly salary at the minimum from \$4,495. to \$5,812. It may be interesting to note that, just as is the case with larger orchestras, our management began the cry of "No Money" last year and persisted well into September

when our repeated strike threats seemed to convince the Trustees, if not the management itself, of our resolve.

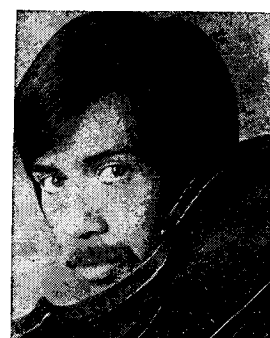
Much thanks is due to Charles Thomas, the President of Local 500 and to Russ Olson, the Secretary-Treasurer, and to Renn Drum, our counsel, who—although he did not attend negotiating sessions—was still of great assistance. The Orchestra Committee's representatives were Gregory Cox and John McClellan.

Gregory A. Cox
North Carolina Symphony
ICSOM Representative

CINCINNATI FILLS STRING POSITIONS



Phillip Ruder



Yizhak Schotten

Phillip Ruder has been engaged as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's new concertmaster. He had previously served in that capacity with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, was professor of violin and chamber music at Southern Methodist University and was a member of that school's resident string quartet. Originally from Chicago, he made his debut with the Chicago Symphony at the age of twelve, and played his New York recital debut in 1963.

Yizhak Schotten is in his first season as principal violist. A native of Israel, he comes to Cincinnati from Boston where he was a member of that orchestra since 1967. He had previously played with the Indianapolis and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras and spent the 1970-1971 season in Japan as the Boston Symphony's exchange member to the Japan Philharmonic.

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