

Senza Sordino

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The 1994 ICSOM Conference

The 1994 ICSOM Conference returned to the comfortable surroundings of Vail, where the air is thin and it was once again possible to find breakfast on the weekdays without a 20-minute hike into town. While the news from the field was not all good, there did seem to be glimmerings of illumination at the end of the tunnel, unaccompanied by sounds of oncoming trains.

In addition to the usual business of an ICSOM conference, delegates heard a number of interesting and timely presentations, some of which will be reproduced in future issues of *Senza Sordino*:

- Joel Wachs, Los Angeles City Councilman, discussed the Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts;
- Ray Abernathy, whose firm assisted the American Airlines flight attendants in their recent successful strike, talked about what he called “bargaining in the sunlight;”
- Patricia Polach, from the law firm of Breedhof and Kaiser, gave a gloomy but cogent summary of the impact of the bankruptcy laws on the collective bargaining process;
- ICSOM consultant Bill Roehl gave a presentation on his consultancy and the process of organizing orchestras; and
- AFM Vice-president Steve Young and IEB member Tim Shea gave a demonstration of the AFM’s new computer system, which will include an online database of collective bargaining agreements organized by subject;

In addition, AFM president Mark Tully Massagli, ROPA president Andrew Brandt, SSD director Florence Nelson and former SSD director Lew Waldeck spoke. Ms. Nelson led a workshop on the role and duties of the orchestra committee, and ICSOM counsel Leonard Leibowitz gave his ever-popular seminar on negotiations.

Biannual elections for officers were held this conference. Bradford D. Buckley was re-elected ICSOM chair, David Angus was re-elected ICSOM president, Lucinda-Lewis was re-elected ICSOM secretary, and Robert Levine was re-elected editor of *Senza Sordino*. Member-at-large Stephanie Tretick of the Pittsburgh Symphony was elected to fill the office of ICSOM treasurer, Carolyn Parks having chosen not to seek re-election to that position. Mary Plaine of the Baltimore Symphony was elected to fill the remaining year of Ms. Tretick’s term as member-at-large from a field of five delegates nominated from the floor.

In addition to the informational activities of the conference, the delegates passed resolutions:

- directing that the ICSOM Directory be published annually;
- requesting that the AFM assist the Alabama Symphony Orchestra musicians and their local union with legal fees incurred during the ASO’s bankruptcy proceedings;
- urging ICSOM musicians to decline invitations to serve on the American Symphony Orchestra League board, and instead to challenge the ASOL to deal with them through their elected representatives;
- thanking Liza Hirsch Du Brul for her contributions to ICSOM orchestras and reiterating ICSOM’s policy of welcoming to the ICSOM conference legal counsel for any member orchestra;
- creating a new suspended status for member orchestras that temporarily fall below ICSOM membership criteria and that apply for same;
- establishing a new associate membership status for foreign orchestras that wish to be affiliated with ICSOM;
- urging the incorporation into model contract language of restrictions on an incoming or departing music director’s power to initiate dismissal proceedings.

As always, conference coordinator Tom Hall earned the sincere thanks of all present for his calm and efficient handling of the countless details that go into making an ICSOM conference possible.

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Text by Robert Levine

The Paradigm Chronicles: An Interview with Thomas Wolf

“We should be careful about our theories, because a theory determines not only what we hope to observe, but what we can observe.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

At the 1992 American Symphony Orchestra League convention a new comet plowed into the orchestra world in the person of Dr. Thomas Wolf. While much has been written about Dr. Wolf's report to the ASOL (The Financial Condition of Symphony Orchestras) and about his “new paradigm,” little is known by musicians about Dr. Wolf himself. But, if Einstein was right, we can evaluate neither the Wolf Report or his “new paradigm” without knowing from whence Dr. Wolf comes.

In his speech to the 1992 ASOL Convention, Dr. Wolf said that “my own history and that of my family is wrapped up in orchestras... my uncle and aunt, the duo-piano team of Luboshutz and Neminoff, made a career soloing with American orchestras, and firmly believed that these cultural institutions were primarily responsible for spreading an appreciation of classical music throughout the United States.” In discussions with musicians in orchestras that have hired him as a consultant, he has made much of the fact that he is a member in good standing of Local 802 (New York City) of the AFM and that he negotiated a contract for the union musicians of the Goldovsky Opera Theater (a company run by the eponymous Boris Goldovsky, Wolf's uncle).

There are those who have known Thomas Wolf, though, who claim that he has expressed strongly anti-union feelings over the years. Before Wolf had set up his consulting firm, the Wolf Organization, a musician he knew asked him why he hadn't applied for an orchestra management position that had come open. Wolf's reply was “I could never do that, because I would have to deal with the musicians' union, and I can't stand them or their attitude.”

Similar sentiments appear in a study done by the Wolf Organization entitled “A Feasibility Study for the Boston Ballet Academy,” commissioned by the Boston Ballet. One of the clearest threads running through the discussion of how to structure such an institution is the desirability of staying as far away as possible from the teachers' union. In the discussion of the option of a private academy, the report states that “the private school option would give Boston Ballet full authority to hire and fire the entire teaching staff and administration... a private school would place few restrictions on the recruitment and retention of... faculty members. There would be no union issues to contend with and no automatic tenure rules to be observed.” Discussing whether to link the program with the Boston public schools, the report states that “it is unlikely that Boston Ballet will be able to exercise control over the design of an integrated curriculum and the hiring of quality faculty... even the

administrator of the program on the Boston Public School side will only have a minimum degree of authority to hire and fire given current union regulations, racial balance requirements, and seniority issues... Because there are unionized, certified teachers in the Boston system who teach music and art, there could be pressure to have them teach their areas of specialty rather than contracting these subjects out.” If the academy was a state chartered school, however, “teacher hiring could be based on standards and policies which served the basic needs of the Academy and [would] not be bound by local union rules.”

Let us translate some of this consultant-ese and search for the recurring themes. Phrases such as “there would be no union issues to contend with and no automatic tenure rules,” “only a minimum degree of authority... given current union regulations,” “unionized, certified teachers” and “not... bound by local union rules” hint strongly that the writer of the report harbors some hostility to “the union.” The very repetition of the word “union,” to those who put less stock in what is said than in how it is said, speaks volumes about the writer's attitudes. Few orchestra managements, for example, will resist the temptation to drop the word “union” into every possible sound bite in an attempt to conjure up images from “On the Waterfront,” even though they know full well that “the union” may only consist of one or two poorly paid officers sitting in a basement office in a lousy part of town wondering what is going on down at “the symphony.” Even in the privacy of a confidential document apparently not intended as part of an anti-union campaign, though, the writer of this report seems unable to use the word “union” as anything other than a pejorative.

A refined version of this attitude makes numerous appearances in the “Financial Condition of Symphony Orchestras” report. In it, Wolf describes a hypothetical “trustee who served on the board of a major symphony 25 years ago. The year is 1966... As our trustee looks back at his tenure, he is wistful. When he joined the board, the city was being flooded with talented musicians—many from Europe. The players seemed content once they joined the orchestra, and a little money seemed to go a long way... the musicians held a variety of other jobs... and they supplemented their income with teaching, other community performing jobs, summer music schools, and chamber music... it was such a simple operation.”

Dr. Wolf then returns to 1966, when “another source of worry is that the civility of the relationship between the musicians and management seems to be eroding. The musicians now operate an effective collective bargaining unit, and they are looking to the orchestra to provide them with a generous salary, a benefits package, and a 52-week contract.”

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In point of fact, by 1966 only two American orchestras had 52-week contracts. The best-paid American orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, had a guaranteed annual wage of \$11,700, a sum paid to the musicians not out of “generosity” but in remuneration for very skilled labor. Only ten orchestras had hospitalization and major medical insurance, in an era when such insurance was considerably cheaper, even in inflation-adjusted dollars, than it is today.

Dr. Wolf hits the fast-forward button one more time to examine the plight of the hypothetical “son of our trustee [who] sits in the chair occupied by his father and grandfather.” He is concerned that “the orchestra is having difficulty using up all the services it contracted for” in its collective bargaining agreement. “The decision on how many concerts to play seems not to be established by audience demand, but instead by the collective bargaining with musicians.”

Of course, as San Francisco Symphony executive director Peter Pastreich pointed out in his response to the Wolf presentation at the ASOL convention, “when the subject of concerts comes up, musicians bargain for fewer, not more, of them. And if we wait for audience demand, we won’t be playing at all. The musicians want to be paid year-round because they want to eat year-round. We ask them to play more concerts in return.”

What is more disturbing than the distortion of the facts are the attitudes expressed. According to Dr. Wolf, “musicians seemed content” with their lot as part-time orchestra members, holding “a variety of other jobs.” When the musicians learned to “operate an effective collective bargaining unit,” then “the civility of the relationship between the musicians and management [seemed] to be eroding.” And the root cause of the hypothetical orchestra’s problems, which he argues is that the orchestra is producing more concerts than the market can bear, is caused by “the collective bargaining with [the] musicians.”

Perhaps the most revealing statements in the Wolf Report, in terms of Dr. Wolf’s attitude towards musicians and the collective bargaining process, are the questions he asks when he describes his “new paradigm.” The first question he asks is “how viable is the full-time 90 to 100-piece orchestra?” His answer is to “reject the notion that this is the ideal structure to which orchestras must aspire,” although he does concede that “perhaps in some places it is not only viable but it is indispensable” (the palpable reluctance of the word “perhaps” is particularly telling).

He goes on to ask what he describes as “the most important” of his questions: “when will orchestras develop a collective decision-making structure that makes everyone a stake-holder in the industry’s future?... some people may answer this question with the response: ‘You could never do that. The players would never agree

to it.’ This assumes that the relationship between the players and management... cannot change. But I would argue that it must change if the industry is to survive... the players need to be a part of the solution, not part of the problem... orchestras must stop designing their decision-making structure like a firing squad in the shape of a big circle.”

Well, one might ask, where are the anti-union assumptions hidden in this reasonable-sounding rhetoric? Simply by asking the question, Wolf seems to assume that the musicians are not already “stakeholders in the industry’s future” and not already behaving as such, whereas the fact that concessionary bargaining is as old as the orchestra business itself disproves his assumption. Musicians in orchestra after orchestra have agreed to forgo income and protections guaranteed them by legally binding agreements in order to save their institutions, only to find on occasion that management had exempted itself from this particular form of “profit-sharing.” In Milwaukee, for example, the musicians discovered that, days before the ratification of an agreement last March that meant a 14.7% cut in their incomes, the management had leased a new Chrysler Concorde for the executive director (at least, as one orchestra member pointed out, it was an American car).

What does “the players need to be a part of the solution, not part of the problem” mean? Dr. Wolf does not detail any situations where decisions made by the players were the cause of an orchestra’s woes. Some help in deconstructing this rhetoric (borrowed, ironically enough, from the Black Panthers) can be found in a document entitled “Organizational Assessment of The Louisville Orchestra,” co-written by Wolf and Don Roth, executive director of the Oregon Symphony (who has referred publicly to collective bargaining agreements as “sixty-page opportunity preventors”). The very first two recommendations in this report deal directly with the musicians’ role in the institution and can be seen as a partial model for how Dr. Wolf thinks that musicians can be “a part of the solution.”

The first recommendation, II.A.1, is: *The constituents of the Louisville Orchestra should refrain from engaging in ad hoc debates in the community and in public over fundamental issues regarding the mission and future vision of the orchestra.*

Given that the boards of most orchestras are so well-represented in the power structure of their communities, including the media, that their vision of the orchestra permeates into the community by osmosis, the only constituents that seem likely to be hurt by not going public are the musicians. Everyone else went public a long time ago.

The second recommendation, II.B.1, reads: *Create a leadership team, consisting of the Board President, the Executive Director, and the Music Director, supplemented by the Orchestra Committee Chair, to*

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1994-95 Preliminary Wage Chart of ICSOM Orchestras
compiled by Stephanie Tretick

Orchestra	Weeks	Annual Minimum Salary	+Max Seniority (35-yr cap)	EMG	Pension		Average Services Weekly	Vacation Weeks	Relief Weeks	
Atlanta	52	52,780	54,600	2,860	24,000		8	8	6 services for strings, 2nd wind/brass	
Baltimore	52	56,420	60,580	none	19,500		8	8	16 services	
Boston	52	71,500	75,920	none	27,000		8	9	3 of 9 vacation weeks are floating	
Buffalo	37	27,241	28,536	1,639	13,680		8	3	3 may be rotating	
Chicago Lyric	23	31,050	32,137	none	8.50%	EPW	7-8	\$ bonus	none	
Chicago	52	72,800	79,800	5,824	40,000		7.5	8	2+1 subscription, 2 summer programs	
Cincinnati		IN NEGOTIATION						8	9	16 services for strings
Cleveland	52	67,600	73,840	2,028	27,000		8	9	1 is floating	
Colorado						DCP	8	4	7 personal services	
Columbus	45	37,125	38,025	none	5-7%		8	3	6 services personal leave	
Dallas	52	54,340	56,160	4,160	23,040		8	8	10 string services	
Detroit	44	58,240	60,000	2,000	24,000		8	2	8 services strings, second winds	
Florida Orch	36	22,500	23,760	180	5.5%	403(b)	8	3	none	
Florida Phil	40	28,961	29,561	none	5%	EPW	8	3	none	
Grant Park	10	9,230	9,599	none	9%	EPW	8	0	none	
Hawaii						EPW	8	3	none	
Houston	52	53,820	55,120	2,860	25,000		8	9	none	
Indianapolis	52	48,100	51,220	none	28,800		8	8.5	8 services strings, 1st and 2nd winds	
Kennedy Center	26	26,675	26,750	none	7%	EPW	11	4%	none	
Los Angeles	52	70,200	74,360	2,000	31,500		8	9	1 week strings, 2nd winds and horn	
Louisville	40	23,856	24,466	1,560	250	EPW	7	4	at least 9 services	
Met Opera	52	67,808	67,808	none	50%		8	9	1 week	
Milwaukee	42	41,790	43,182	none	21,000		8	5	2 floating plus approximately 30 services	
Minnesota	52	64,480	66,040	1,300	27,000		8	8	6 maximum (on seniority) + 7 strings	
National	52	59,280	69,680		25,000		8	9	1 extra week for strings	
New Jersey	31	23,095	23,684	775	7.5%	EPW	7	2	none	
NYC Ballet				none	11%/gr	EPW	6 perf	4	none	
NYC Opera	25	25,00+ 1 wk		none	10%	EPW	5	4	none	
New York	52	73,320	77,740	none	40,000		8	9	1 of 9 vacation weeks	
North Carolina	46	33,350	34,270	none	8%	403(b)	8	4	4 services personal leave	
Oregon	43	31,498	31,498	563	7.5%	EPW	7	2.5	none	
Philadelphia	52	70,720	75,920	5,500	42,500		8	10	1 of 10 vacation weeks	
Phoenix	34	18,826	20,050	none			8	2	none	
Pittsburgh		IN NEGOTIATION						8	9	none
Rochester	41	30,635	31,535	none	5%	DCP	8	4	none	
St. Louis	52	58,240	60,320	none	28,000		8	9	1	
St. Paul	36	42,226	43,376	1,200	9%	403(b)	8	3	1	
San Antonio	39	24,570	25,935	none	5%	EPW	7	3	none	
San Diego	36	30,060	32,220	1,620	6.5%	private	8	2	none	
SF Ballet		22,341	23,485	988	10%	EPW	6.5	10%	none	
SF Opera	25	45,459	46,259	1,553	8.5%	EPW	6+reh	4	1 opera every other season for strings	
SF Symphony	52	70,330	74,230	1,560	28,000		8	10	3 floating	
Syracuse	36	21,011	21,405	1,287	10%		7.52	4	some relief during opera weeks	
Utah	52	35,152	36,452	1,040	8%	EPW/403(B)	8	9	3 additional unpaid weeks	

Heimberg's Handy Hints, Volume II

Dorothy Parker once said that the only thing she ever learned in college was that, if you spit on a pencil eraser, it would erase ink.

This knowledge is important and powerful in our world of music, and it has kept pace with technological change: pencil erasers (and spit—in modest, tasteful doses) will also take out printed notes, photocopied markings, and smudged fingerprints.

Used delicately this device can be a great aid in rehearsals: misprints can be banished permanently, ambiguous bowings can be cleared up on the spot, bad fingerings can be expunged. (Used roughly it can erase right through the page, so be careful not to incur the wrath of your librarian.)

Here is a Handy Hint which has never been used, but should be tried: it could speed up and smooth out certain kinds of auditions—especially CLARINET auditions.

In all the thousands of varied auditions I have experienced in my life, clarinet auditions tend to go the most slowly because of the transportation time. I sincerely feel for the clarinetists; they have so much to worry about in addition to just playing. Auditions are hard enough under normal circumstances; the whole process gets even more difficult when you add the complications of carrying three to six horns (B flat, C, A, E flat, Bass, with an occasional saxophone or basset horn thrown in) plus a cup of soaking reeds, music, a wiping cloth... etc.

Clarinetists usually come into the audition room bristling with instruments and equipment—in their hands, under their arms, cloth over their shoulder, music in their mouth. Then they have to put it all down. Then they have to test and warm up, then play, then move the mouthpiece and test again and play again... several times. And when they're finished they have to pick it all up, while the committee waits and the next candidate stands—bristling—outside the door.

My proposed solution: a CLARINET CART. It would be like the desert carts in those expensive restaurants we rarely patronize. A small rolling table with a felt-covered top (for softness), and a high edge (for security) would make transportation safer and easier under those difficult audition conditions. It could streamline the process *without speeding up the individual audition*. The players would have at least as much warmup and preparation time as before—maybe more, since there would be less time pressure throughout the day.

Now, if every clarinetist brought his or her own cart, there could be traffic jams in the hallway, so I suggest that managements provide

the carts. Three would be a good number: one for the current candidate, one for the waiting candidate, and one for the next in line.

Get them to try it—we might all like it.

Clarinet carts are a daydreamed Handy Hint, an idea that might be useful if it were ever tried. The next one is sliced from real life: I am in the midst of a very exciting experiment on my viola.

I recently played on a large modern viola that felt small (this is NOT a viola joke). The playing length of the strings had been shortened by the insertion of a specially cut ebony piece into the fingerboard near the scroll. That piece moved the nut which the strings pass over about $\frac{3}{8}$ " closer to the bridge.

I decided to try this device on my Raffaello Fiorini (16 $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

Any experiment on an instrument set-up is an intrepid move for a violist. Among string players, bassists are the boldest about experimenting with the ergonomics of their instruments. Throughout history they have changed tunings, altered string-playing lengths, adjusted bridge angles, added extensions. The rest of us tend to be more conservative. We think of ourselves as the guardians of instrumental works of art passed down through time—which we are. The down side is that we adjust ourselves to fit the instrument, even when it hurts.

So far the small adjustment to my Fiorini has yielded enormous results. Tone has not been affected, but ease of playing has. Intervals are closer together, which lightens the work of the left hand, and the strings speak more easily. The next time San Francisco Opera does the *Ring* I won't have to shift to a smaller instrument in self-defense—as I did the last time.

Of course it's true that all the notes are now in very slightly different places on my viola, but there's a solution to that, too: practice (another Handy Hint I have to keep remembering.)

The invitation I put forward in my last article is still open: if you have devised, developed, discovered or daydreamed any useful techniques, please let me know. This request is open to all colleagues, from any section, with any length of experience (you don't have to be old to be an Old Pro!) Full credit and recognition will be given for all submissions used—which will probably be all of them.

Please send your cards and letters to: Tom Heimberg, 1656 Ocean View Avenue, Kensington CA 94707. Thanks; I look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Heimberg is a member of the San Francisco Opera orchestra viola section and also serves as ICSOM delegate.

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work together as a unit to create and implement a set of operating strategies for the organization. Build these strategies in dialog with the other members of the Orchestra family: the Board, staff, musicians, and direct service volunteers.

This is certainly not the old-style structure that Dr. Wolf described as “like a firing squad in the shape of a big circle.” It is, in fact, more like a firing squad of three in a very straight line indeed. It will come as no surprise to the astute reader that “the musicians of the Orchestra currently have chosen not to participate in the long-range planning process.” But this kind of “participation” does seem to be what Wolf had in mind when, in May of this year, he met with the Louisville Orchestra Players Committee and told them “I acknowledge that you are in a collective bargaining environment rather than a cooperative bargaining environment... unfortunately, this will have to change or you won’t have anywhere to go.” Unless the orchestra committee chair comes to the proposed leadership team accompanied by some very large defensive linemen, his or her cooperation would seem to be guaranteed in advance, but perhaps that’s the point.

What the Wolf report seems to reveal is a profound nostalgia for the days when players were “content once they joined the orchestra,” when “orchestra musicians held a variety of other jobs... and they supplemented their income with teaching.” Those were the days when there was “civility” between the musicians and management, when the number of concerts was “established by audience demand, [not] by the collective bargaining agreement.”

The problem with all this nostalgia, of course, is that the good old days never were, especially not for the musicians. As Deborah Borda, executive director of the New York Philharmonic, stated in her response to Wolf’s speech to the ASOL conference, “gone are the days when Madame Koussevitsky could sit observing a rehearsal of the BSO, inform Serge of who was ‘not trying hard enough,’ and have a pink slip on their stands the next morning.” The fact that orchestras have formed effective collective bargaining units is not the root cause of any lack of civility between managements and musicians; the root cause is the patriarchal and feudal structure of the orchestra itself. The kinds of protections that the writer of the report on the Boston Ballet school railed against have not created the lack of civility that Wolf decries; they have only made the tensions between managements and musicians, and conductors and musicians, less dangerous for the musicians to openly express and address.

What are the economic interests of consultants? It is interesting that Dr. Wolf did very little work with orchestras prior to this report. In fact, he describes himself as “something of an orchestra outsider.” Since his work on the report on the supposed financial crisis in the orchestra industry and the second stage of the ASOL’s project, this

has most definitely changed. Since 1992, he has been hired as a consultant by the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Louisville Orchestra, has written articles on orchestra economics, and has appeared on national television as an expert on the subject. Clearly Dr. Wolf has himself become a stake-holder in the orchestra business, and the stakes are not small: for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1992, the Wolf Organization was paid \$68,772 by the ASOL for “professional services,” and the Louisville Orchestra is reportedly paying the Wolf Organization \$50,000, while the musicians gave back approximately \$300,000 in the renegotiation of their agreement last spring.

In an attempt to try to resolve some of these questions, and in order to hear his views first-hand, *Senza Sordino* interviewed Dr. Wolf on October 7. Here are excerpts from the interview:

Senza: What orchestras have you consulted for besides Louisville and Philadelphia?

Wolf: We’ve done some work in Kansas City; we did a major marketing project for the major organizations there.

Senza: Has it made an impact?

Wolf: Absolutely. We saw, over a three-year period, a one-third increase in the number of households participating in the organizations.

Senza: To what do you attribute that?

Wolf: We sat down and we came up with a creative solution to what was seen as a competition problem. There was a new performing arts center coming online in Johnson County [a suburb of Kansas City], and the downtown arts organizations were panicked that they were going to lose audience. So the idea was to look at, in a very comprehensive way, participation in the arts in Johnson County, and to develop some marketing strategies over a three-year period to see whether we could increase total participation for all the groups, which we did. The statistics are extremely impressive, and the symphony benefited substantially.

Senza: There did seem to be some sense [in the “Financial Condition of Symphony Orchestras” report] that you felt that collective bargaining had led to the problems that orchestras were having.

Wolf: I’d sure like to know where you picked that up from. I was very, very careful in there, and in my public statements, to try to make the point that collective bargaining has led to a living wage and working conditions for musicians. That’s always been my position.

Senza: What do you think the role is now for collective bargaining?

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Wolf: I think that orchestras are in a crisis. If you look at some of the financial projections that we made in the “Financial Condition” report about the fact that things were going to worsen for the industry, you can see that a lot of those numbers are tracking exactly as we projected. There are a lot of orchestras that are in trouble. Certainly it would be true to say that, because of the nature of collective bargaining, orchestra managements have always, as a strategy, talked about the fact that things are tough, and that’s a good negotiating position for an orchestra to take. I think we’re in a different situation now. I think that the problems of orchestras are going to require some serious reorganization and rethinking, and it’s better done with all the participants putting their heads together and figuring out how to do that.

There’s a statistic in “Financial Condition” that I think is one of the most striking statistics in there. Very few people picked up on it. In about a twenty year period, between 1970 and 1990, orchestras’ share of the philanthropic dollar dropped by about a third. That’s a big story. Orchestras used to be the only game in town, or certainly the biggest game in town.

If you look at the major foundations now, how many of them have programs of support for orchestras? Very few. The biggest new player is the Lila M. Wallace Fund. They have a program for museums, they have a program for basically everyone but orchestras. Ford doesn’t have one for orchestras any more. There’s huge competition for the dollars that are available. Audiences for the first time aren’t growing. Between 1957, when the Ford Foundation got into the business of arts philanthropy and basically invented the arts grant, until the early ’80s, you had public sector [support] growing, private sector growing, and audiences growing. Every source of funding was growing, and then overnight they all either are declining or are stable.

Senza: How is changing the relationship of the musicians to the institution going to affect that? If the issue is fundamentally an economic one, you’re only going to address it in two ways: increase revenue or decrease expenses.

Wolf: Yes, but there are a lot of ways to increase revenue. One way to increase revenue is to find new sources of revenue, or new ways to create revenue. The place where we probably part company is over the fact that I think that orchestras need to redefine the range of services that they offer, and that they have to ask musicians to do more things if they want to increase revenue. I want to see musicians continue to be well-paid, and, in some cases, where they work for orchestras

where they’re not well-paid, to become well-paid for the first time. You can’t create revenue sources from the traditional places where you’ve had them before. If you read the article I did for the *International Arts Manager*, I made it very clear what I think the basic alternatives are. We all know the result of the crash course between musicians not accepting the wage that’s offered and orchestras not having more money to offer. If that’s a real situation, and admittedly over the past several decades that’s been more of a red herring than a real situation, what happens is that the institution goes out of business. That’s not good for anyone, so my sense is that one does anything one can to avoid that.

Senza: Do you think there is sufficient revenue potential in some of these newer things to really make that much of a difference?

Wolf: I don’t know, but they have to be tested.

Senza: In our situation in Milwaukee with our ACE (Arts in Community Education) program, which is a very small program, it’s not clear to me that it ever has the potential to really replace any other significant source of revenue that we might lose.

Wolf: Yes, except that you see all of these funders sitting on the side, where there is some potentially very big money out there. Most of that money is going to be directed to arts education, and we’re only seeing the tip of the iceberg. I’ve been working in Charlotte recently for the city, and they’re on the verge of doing some very big things in arts education with some very big resources. They’re in the process of raising a \$25 million endowment for arts and culture, and a lot of that will be used for arts education. The way orchestras operate was not invented in a year. These operational changes will take time and will only happen as a result of cooperative piloting of programs. The one thing I think is encouraging is that the Knight Foundation is the first of the big national foundations to put their foot in the water, and they are starting a program of support for orchestras that is interested in ways of dealing with their systemic problems.

There’s a whole area of cultural tourism, where working with cities and convention and tourism bureaus to package some of the arts and cultural organizations would be a logical way to get more paying people in seats. The arts and cultural organizations and hotels and restaurants have the same overlapping interest, which is to get people in and spending money, and if they can collectively figure out a way to

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market themselves so that everybody benefits, then that's a whole area that could be very fruitful.

But there are no panaceas. If there were any easy solutions, someone would have jumped on them. But I do think, and here I do not consider myself an expert, that in some of the work rules relating to media and recordings, American orchestras have lost out. That could be potentially a large source of revenue and a way to stabilize orchestras if a lot of the work that was going to European orchestras went to American orchestras.

Senza: Yet, in Seattle, where they have probably the most liberal recording rules in the business, they don't seem to be in any better shape than anyone else; worse than a lot, in fact.

Wolf: That may be true, but I don't think you can say that's because they have liberal work rules.

Senza: No, it's not, but my point is that it doesn't seem to have helped.

Wolf: You have to take into account the funding base in Seattle, the history of the orchestra, the condition of the endowment. I think it's a little dangerous to generalize by saying that they've got liberal work rules, they're in trouble, therefore liberal work rules don't help.

Senza: In any given situation, it's hard to say what one factor is the problem. Often it's not one factor.

Wolf: People have said "why would you single out [musician] salaries as something which has to be looked at very carefully?" Well, when something is between 49% and 52% of most orchestra budgets, it's a big number, and if there are ways you can figure out how to play with that number, not in order to reduce anybody's salary in particular, but in order to make sure that that number is assured in such a way that it maximizes revenue, I would do it.

Senza: And yet that figure has been pretty constant over the years.

Wolf: It has. I was totally flabbergasted by the reaction [to the report]. When I wrote the text for this report, I had been intending to keep as neutral a position as possible. I think there might have been some people on what you would consider "the other side" who were looking for the report to say very clearly that the problem was that musicians were getting too much money. I thought the report would be welcomed by people, because I made a very big point of the fact that the 50-51% figure hasn't changed much. So I was surprised by the reaction of certain people who felt this was a dangerous report.

Senza: Would it be fair to say that, to the extent that you lay blame at the feet of the collective bargaining process, it would be in the area of work rules?

Wolf: I'm not laying any blame. I've been very careful not to comment on who was at fault historically. It's very important to understand that the situation that we got ourselves into has much more to do with a changing environment than it does with villains. This is a point I've made repeatedly. You have a situation, which has affected all of the arts, in which three areas on the revenue side were growing. It was logical that at the same time large institutions were trying to become more professional, both on the artistic side and the management side. Then all three of those sources suddenly stopped growing, and it's very difficult when that happens to say "this is a permanent change." You say "this is an anomaly," you say "the economy's bad," you say any number of things. In England, when Margaret Thatcher was elected, everyone said "Thatcher wants to privatize everything and not give as much money to the arts council, but she'll be out in not very long." Well, she wasn't out, and in fact she's changed the whole funding base for the arts, and those people who said this is temporary and things will go back to normal are hurting now. To the extent that there's a problem, the problem is that there are a number of people that are saying "things aren't that different." I think they are that different. I think the traditional revenue sources are not growing at a fast enough pace, that expenses have increased beyond the time that the revenue sources were not increasing. Some orchestras, the very largest ones, have been protected because they have fairly large endowments, and the smaller ones are protected because they have very flexible ways of doing business. The orchestras that are hurting the most are the ones that are caught in the middle; that are undercapitalized and don't have as much flexibility. So I'm not laying blame at anyone's feet. What I am saying is that the nature of the dialog is going to have to change, because the nature of the industry is going to have to change. And that, I guess, is radical.

Senza: Let me challenge that statement a bit. In your 1992 ASOL speech, when you delivered the "Financial Condition" document, you said that "the players need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem." The sense of that is that, in some way, the players have been part of the problem.

Wolf: No, that statement is "to be," that's in the future tense. They need to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Senza: So you're not really saying or implying that the problems that the industry is facing are necessarily the players' fault?

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Wolf: That's right. I've never said that. Listen, I made my living as a musician for a number of years. I'm not saying that the problems of orchestras are because of collective bargaining or because of musicians. The fact of the matter is that it costs a certain amount to live. In most orchestras in this country, musicians don't make enough to live and they have to do other things. I would like to see every musician make a living wage; that's fine, that's great. But on the other hand I want to see creative solutions in order to make that possible. I've been extremely careful not to say that anybody is at fault for this situation, because I think that this situation has not grown out of villains. I think it's grown out of a changing environment, and that change was severe, because instead of one or two of the traditional revenue sources going into a changing mode, all three did roughly within two or three years of each other.

The reader may be excused for having drawn a rather contradictory portrait of Dr. Wolf from this article. Two things are clear, however. The first is that, regardless of Dr. Wolf's stated good intentions, "The Financial Condition of Symphony Orchestras" report has provided the intellectual underpinnings for a concerted attack on the livelihoods of musicians in a large number of orchestras. Since 1992, fourteen ICsOM orchestras have been forced to accept shorter seasons and lower incomes, the one "remedy" of Wolf's that has been enthusiastically embraced by managements and boards. His other proposed solutions to the ills of orchestras are hypothetical at best. Some, while good and useful in and of themselves (such as increasing orchestras' role in arts education), may indeed have potential for increasing revenue, but that potential is decidedly unproven, as he admits. Others, such as liberalizing recording rules, would only seem to have potential for the orchestras that get there first, and even that potential depends largely on the cannibalization of other musicians' work.

The second, and more important, point to note about Dr. Wolf is that, like every other participant in the symphony orchestra business in America, he comes to the table with biases and preconceptions. It is no surprise that the biases of consultants so often neatly dovetail with the agendas of those hiring the consultants; "he that pays the piper calls the tune" is not an expression that applies solely to musicians. Consultants such as Dr. Wolf are not objective observers of the field; they too are players in our little drama, and musicians would be well advised to scrutinize their interests and biases as carefully as they do those of managements, conductors, boards, and the American Symphony Orchestra League. Fundamentally, it is with these people, and not orchestra musicians, that the interests of the consultants lie.

Coda

Bernhard Goldschmidt, principal second violin of the Cleveland Orchestra for 30 years, died of a heart attack October 29 in Morristown NJ.

Goldschmidt was born in Berlin but emigrated with his family to Shanghai to escape Nazi Germany. After playing in the Shanghai Philharmonic he moved to the United States in 1947, where he studied at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music and the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood. He joined the Cleveland Orchestra in 1958 and was promoted to the principal second violin position by George Szell in 1964. Prior to joining the orchestra, Goldschmidt had played with the Baltimore Symphony and the Houston Symphony, as well as the US Air Force Strolling Strings.

In memory of Goldschmidt, the Cleveland Orchestra opened its concert on November 3 with the "Air" from Bach's Orchestral Suite in D, BWV 1068, with the principal second violin chair vacant.



Conference Coordinator Tom Hall

One to a Stand?

This story starts with one of my fellow violists in the San Francisco Symphony returning to work after a substantial absence because of injury. Her physical therapist recommended to her that she not play two people on a stand, because it made her bend in an uncomfortable and unnatural way. So she and her stand partner now use two separate stands.

My own stand partner recently took time off because of shoulder problems. The problems have abated but are not gone. This past week I too have experienced some discomfort in my shoulder and back. As a result, my stand partner and I agreed to try what our colleague is trying: getting a second music stand and each using one.

It feels like heaven. We don't have to twist to see the music, can align the stand to see the conductor easily, can each have a stand at the height that is comfortable for both of us. I can see, and therefore play, the notes more easily. Being more comfortable and relaxed, I can respond to what is happening on stage more easily.

Despite the fact that it seems to be an easy solution to a difficult issue, there are hidden problems, especially if use of this solution escalates. The purpose of this article is to begin discussions on a national level so we can head off the potential problems.

When I first talked to the stagehand about giving us an extra stand, he was very willing, but worried about what happens when we tour to places with small stages. My initial response was that we would probably have to bend (pun intended) and use only one stand for those concerts. But what happens if more and more people use two stands? How will the stage hands adjust? Won't it materially affect their job? They already have many things to keep track of.

Our librarian, too, was more than willing to set up an extra folder for us, but he had a word of caution. What happens when entire string sections of the major symphonies use one stand each? Right now, the librarians are burdened with the task of copying bowings into each part. Will their task double? Or will we be willing to use photocopied parts? What will the response of the publishers be? Will they increase the number of string parts they sell? How much will it cost? What about rental parts? Will they throw in extra parts, or will they allow us to photocopy extra parts, which they do not now allow? Most music libraries have a storage problem that will be made worse with more parts to store. And of course there will be some page turns that will need attention or the whole section will end up turning pages rather than playing.

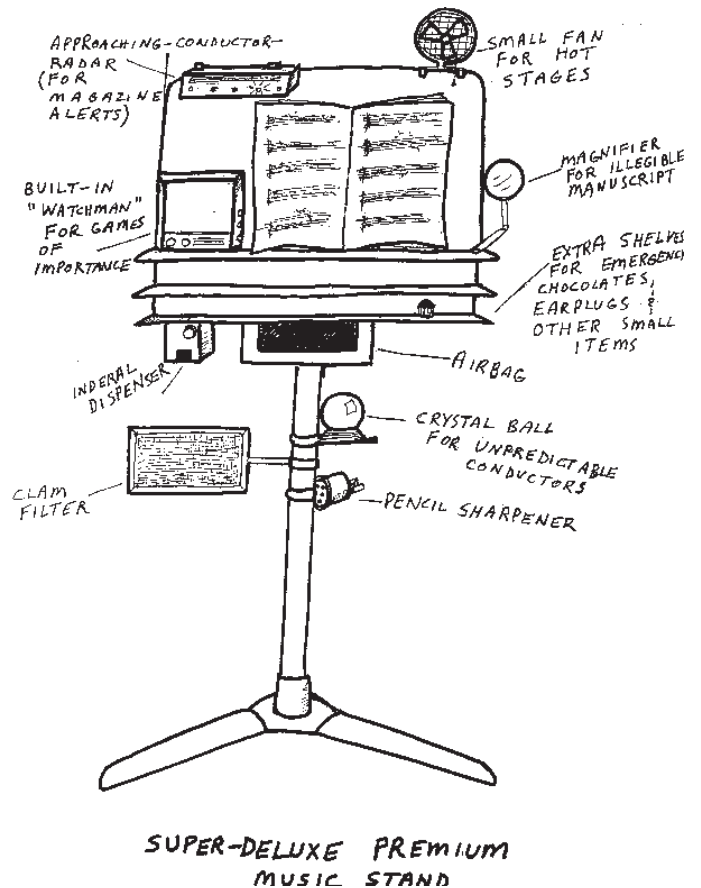
Management, too, may have a problem. They may need to purchase more stands, pay the stage hands more for trucking extra stands

around, pay for the extra rental or purchase of parts, have more of a lag during changes between pieces while more stands are flung about, and so forth.

Our colleagues may also have a problem. The person behind me today complained that he couldn't see around me, but I was limited where I could move to on the stage, partly because of the number of stands around, leaving him dissatisfied. Playing two on a part has built-in disadvantages which, I feel, have played a role in the rash of injuries in the orchestras today. Playing one on a stand can help alleviate those problems, but make for still more problems.

DON EHRLICH

Don Ehrlich is a member of the San Francisco Symphony.



1994 ICSOM Conference Resolutions

WHEREAS the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and its local union have been engaged in a legal struggle involving a challenge to the propriety of the Board's bankruptcy filing; and

whereas the outcome of that litigation will surely have considerable impact on other similar situations in other orchestras; and

whereas the legal fees thus far incurred by the ASO and the local union are extremely high and well beyond the means of the musicians and the local union; and

whereas an appeal has been filed which will increase the already heavy legal debt; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that ICSOM urge the AFM to subsidize all legal fees incurred from April 1994 through July 1994 in connection with the current appeal from the determination of the bankruptcy court.



WHEREAS The American Symphony Orchestra League (the "League") is an organization which claims to speak for all facets of the symphonic industry, but is in fact an organization which has historically served the interests of managements and boards of symphony orchestras; and

whereas the League has invited musicians, chosen by itself, to serve in various capacities within its organization, and claims that those musicians truly represent the interests of working musicians; and

whereas these actions are a transparent attempt to bypass the elected representatives of the musicians and thereby diminish the effectiveness of those representatives; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the 1994 ICSOM Conference strongly urge all organized musicians to decline invitations from the League, and instead challenge the League to communicate through duly elected representatives of musicians.



IN THE INTEREST OF RECONCILIATION: whereas Liza Hirsch Du Brul, as the chief negotiator for many ICSOM, ROPA, and OCSM orchestras, has contributed greatly to the survival, recovery and well-being of our orchestras; now therefore be it resolved that the ICSOM Conference of 1994 states its thanks and recognition of Liza Hirsch Du Brul for her contributions to our profession and reaffirms the ICSOM policy of open welcome to all attorneys invited by their orchestras for meetings.



WHEREAS, during these troubled times, changed circumstances on a local level have caused some ICSOM orchestras to fall below the standards of membership as set forth in Article III Section 2(a) of the ICSOM bylaws; and

whereas such member orchestras often need time to restructure, reorganize, or otherwise rehabilitate themselves; and

whereas the delegates to the 1994 ICSOM Conference wish to help those orchestras during those difficult times, and to allow those orchestras to maintain their relationship with ICSOM, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that Article III of the ICSOM bylaws be amended by adding a new Section 2.(e) as follows:

Section 2.(e). If a member orchestra should fall below the requirements set forth in Section 2.(a) above, that orchestra may apply to the Governing Board for a grant of suspended status. An orchestra granted such status need not pay dues to ICSOM, but shall continue to be carried as a member orchestra, receive *Senza Sordino*, be entitled to send a representative to the annual Conference, and be listed in the ICSOM Directory. For good and sufficient cause, the Governing Board may recommend the withdrawal of such status at any time, subject to action of the next annual Conference.



WHEREAS ICSOM has established and maintained communication with a number of foreign orchestras; and

whereas many of those orchestras have expressed an interest in establishing a more formal relationship with ICSOM; and

whereas such more formal relationships are of great mutual benefit to both the foreign orchestra and ICSOM; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that Article III of the ICSOM bylaws be amended by adding a new Section 2.(f) as follows:

2.(f). A foreign orchestra may apply for and be granted Associate Membership with the consent and approval of the annual Conference. Terms and conditions for such status shall be established by the Governing Board.



BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates to the 1994 ICSOM Conference strongly endorse the incorporation into model contract language of the following principle: that there shall be clear restrictions on the initiation of dismissal procedures with regard to the beginning and ending of a music director's tenure with the orchestra.



Delegates to the 1994 ICSOM Conference in session

Newslets

Michael J. Koss, CEO of Koss Corporation and secretary of the American Symphony Orchestra League, expressed frustration during Koss Corporation's annual meeting over his company's inability to retain its workers, according to an article in the Milwaukee *Sentinel* on October 21. "I am shocked that people would rather stay home than have a job," he said, citing figures that, on the Monday before the company's annual meeting, the company had lost 32 temporary workers—10% of the total work force. Although temporary workers are paid close to minimum wage, they receive some benefits, according to Koss, who said that he did not believe the retention problem was related to pay.

DOS Orchestra, ICSOM's weekly electronic newsletter about professional orchestras, is now accessible via the Internet's World Wide Web, thanks to the good offices of Dale Gold, principal bassist of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Point your Web browser to <http://www.actrix.gen.nz/users/dgold/do/> for back issues of *DOS Orchestra*, information about the NZSO, and an "Amusements" page. *DOS Orchestra* continues to be available by email; send email to dos@icsom.org to be added to the mailing list.

Michael McGillivray, chair of the orchestra committee of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and secretary-treasurer of the Birmingham musicians' union, Local 256-733 AFM, has been appointed Orchestra Personnel and Operations Manager of the Detroit Symphony. His departure was hailed by Metropolitan Arts Council head Walter Sechriest, who said that McGillivray's departure "will

get one of the red flags out of the pot," referring to local efforts to reestablish an orchestra in Birmingham. The red flag responded "if my departure stimulates something, I'll be cheering from Detroit."



Photo by David Garrett

The ICSOM Governing Board

Front row: David Angus, Michael Moore, Bradford D. Buckley, Mary Plaine, James Clute. Second row: Robert Levine, Carolyn Parks (*past ICSOM treasurer*), Lucinda-Lewis, Charles Schlueter. Not pictured: Stephanie Tretick (*on tour*).

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