

Senza Sordino

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Those Who Came Before

by Richard Levine

More than most we meet in our daily lives, orchestral musicians are blessed with a direct connection to those who came before, be they teachers, performers, conductors, or composers. Less directly, we are also tied to many other individuals from history: poets, painters, noblemen, emperors, and religious figures. Some may think, and we often hear, that our ties to the past are indicative of a dead art, a museum filled only with works whose relevance has long ago waned.

Quite the opposite is true. The rich tapestry that our past has woven is tangible evidence of the depth of music's connection to the very soul of humanity. It is that connection to our inner being that makes music relevant. It is also why great art can affect people from different backgrounds, different social standings, different educational levels, and different cultures, in much the same way.

Our duty as artists, whether we perform an old or a contemporary piece, is to connect with the listener in a fundamental way. If we are not able to do that, our performance is irrelevant as art no matter when the music was composed. If we do connect, the audience understands the relevance and expresses it through their applause. I doubt there is a performer on stage who does not feel the energy of the audience's reaction after hearing a truly great composition.

Change is a part of life, and, last anyone checked, we and our audiences are all living, breathing, contemporary beings. Because of that, how we as performers connect with our audiences must differ from how performers did long ago. But what it is we connect to remains fundamental to the human spirit.

What then of the charge that we are museum pieces? Why does this sentiment seem to resonate with so many? One answer is that art is not for everyone and that, unless a listener is a sensitive individual who is open enough to allow a connection to music, that listener can never appreciate the value and relevance of music. But this is an insufficient answer. There are those who appreciate contemporary art forms, including sculpture, painting, poetry, plays, and

even music, who say they have no interest in symphonic music. To them, the very sound of an orchestra may itself cause a strong negative reaction. We see such attitudes whenever we must argue for funding and support within our communities. Regrettably, we too often see such attitudes expressed in print.

How, if we wish more people to appreciate our music, can such strong reactions be overcome? If we fundamentally believe that our art is relevant and connects deep within people—something that helps them connect with something they themselves value—we will not spend our time and energy trying to force our view on others and attempting to ensure that potential audience members agree that we offer something valuable.

We have but two avenues available. The first is what each of us does: perform our music well. Of course, there is always room for improvement—from musicians, from conductors, from venues, from board and management support, and so on. But we all know that quality does make a difference. It is in our endeavor to perform well that we disprove the notion that ours is a dead art, for each time we perform, it is a new performance created by the individual efforts of live musicians, manifested by the totality of all forces coming together in the hall and emanating from all the performers and audience members in attendance.

That is why recorded music, although it has its value, does not usually touch people in the same way as live performances. Think back upon those performances that have touched you the most. How many of them still evoke a feeling of fondness for or other strong connection to the performer(s)? Is the same true for recorded performances you have heard? To press the point further, what would be the reaction of an audience to a performance where they sat and listened to a performance recorded the night before, or to an orchestra performing behind a curtain that severed the audience's connection to the performers?

I realize that what I am saying is news to no one who appreciates music. So what of the second avenue? Again, I doubt it will be news to you. We must spread the word that there is something valuable in what we do in a positive, influential, and pervasive manner. This is not to argue the point to people, but rather to let them know what it is we do in an engaging way. If marketing can sell unnecessary and even harmful products to consumers, think of what a tool it could and should be for a product that people think makes their lives better. To be effective, though, our story cannot be told in one way

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Chairperson's Report by Jan Gippo



ICSOM was created because symphony musicians of the late 1950s realized that they were a specialized group within the AFM that needed to be able to represent themselves in contract negotiations. That right we won now allows us to shape our contracts to suit our special needs in working conditions, salary, pension, medical and instrument insurance, and employment security. We fought hard for this recognition. We won our battle, and we formed ICSOM.

There was a camaraderie back then that grew out of many "us-against-them" battles. We not only had to fight our managements and our locals, but the AFM as well. We worked hard through the years, gaining ground at a snail's pace, but at each turn we became more influential. Never once did we let down our guard. We were united all the way. We spoke with one very clear voice, and we secured a place in the union that carried some political clout and great influence in national contract negotiations.

We won the battle of acceptance. Some larger cities started to support symphony orchestras in new ways, understanding that we needed good wages, secure pensions, comprehensive medical insurance, and working conditions that promote artistic excellence. Even smaller orchestras began to see a change in attitude. By the late 1960s, eight orchestras had 52-week seasons, recording contracts, European tours, and a living wage. By 1972, when I joined the Saint Louis Symphony, there were seventeen orchestras with 52-week seasons, and all of those orchestras were finding ways to record. We are still working hard to secure dignity and artistic recognition for every musician in every orchestra. That is why there is ICSOM. That is why we must be vigilant.

A danger of the autonomy orchestras won can surface when we forget the lessons of the past and the fights ICSOM fought. Independence can make orchestra leadership myopic. They can ignore colleagues in other orchestras and think only about what is good for them and their orchestra. This can threaten hard-won gains that have served musicians elsewhere well.

One principle ICSOM has always stood for is that we, as a fraternity of highly trained artists, support one another whenever possible. We have an obligation to help our industry as a whole, not just our own orchestra. This is an art form that needs public support and nurturing. That can best be gained when we ourselves set the standards to be met and adhere to them, even at personal sacrifice.

That brings me to the present and to a controversy now upon us. Even though AFM bylaws require approval by the International President's Office (or Vice President from Canada) before media provisions are presented for ratification, some musicians' negotiation teams have neglected this. That has created some heated dialogue between musicians during the last six years and has unfortunately given

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International Conference of Symphony & Opera Musicians

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Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
The Cleveland Orchestra
Colorado Symphony Orchestra
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Florida Orchestra
Florida Philharmonic Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grant Park Symphony Orchestra
Honolulu Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
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Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
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New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
New York City Ballet Orchestra
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President's Report by Bruce Ridge



I joined the American Federation of Musicians when I was just a teenager, and I still have my first union card to prove it. This was the late '70s, and it was an amazing time for me. I was hearing Miles Davis's music for the first time and performing it. I was hearing Beethoven's Fifth for the first time and performing it. I was playing in concert halls, in country bars behind chicken wire fencing, and in jazz clubs that I was too young to get into legally, and I was discovering what would become my life's work. I had many mentors back then, some famous and some not. I was fortunate that those mentors introduced me to the musicians union. I attended my first meeting of Local 125, in downtown Norfolk, when I was just 15 years old. From the time that I was learning the names of the great composers whose music I would perform for the rest of my career and the names of the great musicians that I would seek to emulate, I also learned the name of Leonard Leibowitz.

I didn't actually meet Len until some years later, but I was always aware that he was a figure that had influence in my life, fighting tirelessly for the righteous cause of musicians. His legendary tenacity was an inspiration to me as I fought my way through every gig, through every class at two conservatories, and through every audition. One of the benefits of my work in ICSOM has been that I can now also refer to Mr. Leibowitz as a friend.

A few weeks ago, by mere chance, Len and I both happened to be working all night long, which I think is not entirely unusual for either of us. On this one night, we happened to stumble into a real-time e-mail debate at 5:00 AM.

I had been sending around an article I'd written for a local newspaper, promoting the idea that the arts are good for the economy of a local community. While this concept is unarguably clear, the artist still finds that he or she must often argue finances with the very people who should understand the economic value of the artist.

In words that would surprise many to learn came from a labor attorney, Len wrote me (at 4:59 AM):

I wish that there would be no need for the artist to justify governmental and corporate support of great music by arguing its value in financial terms as if it were a commodity, like pig futures, or any other kind of "business." Wouldn't the artists be better equipped to demonstrate the intrinsic values of refreshment of the human spirit, the recognition of beauty, and the contribution to nurturing and raising truly civilized and cultured men and women that are the real assets of art? Shouldn't it be the business leaders, e.g., our own board members and other interested individuals, corporate and governmental figures, who report on the economic impact of the arts to their

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Secretary's Report by Laura Ross



I recently finished reading Julie Ayer's wonderful book, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History*. I encourage you all to read this wonderful retelling of the formation of ICSOM and of the activism of ICSOM's founders. It was their actions that began the long climb to the respect and impressive collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) that symphonic musicians possess today. In her book, Julie speaks of the development of the communication network among orchestras from which grew the AFM wage charts for ICSOM, OCSM, and ROPA. Although the AFM now compiles the wage chart information, those charts began with us, ICSOM, as we tried to communicate the most accurate information we had to our colleagues across the country.

The ICSOM settlement bulletin is another important communiqué. This bulletin outlines the changes negotiated in our contracts and is used by our colleagues as a source of important information during their negotiations. The ICSOM settlement bulletin is the first full report from an orchestra to the rest of the field that details wage and benefit modifications, changes to season length and in working conditions, and other miscellaneous adjustments.

When I became ICSOM secretary, I noticed an inconsistency in how wages and Electronic Media Guarantees (EMGs) were reported in our settlement bulletins. Some orchestras do as is required for the AFM wage charts and report regular and EMG wages separately. Others insist on merging EMG wages with regular salary. As ICSOM Electronic Media Committee Chair Bill Foster recently reminded me that, when an EMG is reported merged with regular salaries, it sometimes reflects the underlying CBA. At the 2005 ICSOM Conference in San Diego, both Bill and I requested that EMGs be reported consistent with the wage charts. Now we are also asking that EMGs be clarified in CBAs as separate wages.

This contradictory reporting of wages from orchestra to orchestra has seriously muddied the waters in regard to the real meaning and intent of an EMG. I know EMGs are a touchy subject for some orchestras. Reporting of weekly salary for some orchestras could be reduced by \$100 per week if the EMG is not included. It also seriously erodes the "perceived" annual salary. However, as the person who assembles and produces these bulletins, I believe it's time we all look at this honestly.

My perspective, as a member of an orchestra that agreed to accept an EMG for the first time in 2001, is that EMGs are for electronic media work only and should not be included as regular salary when reporting wages. I have been skeptical with regard to EMGs because, during negotiations with a former manager, we were offered an EMG that increased each season. It was little more than a bad job of disguising salary increases from the board; he offered no guarantee

(continued on page 5—see EMG REPORTING)

Required Reading for All Musicians

Leonard Leibowitz Reviews

More Than Meets The Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History by Julie Ayer

Julie Ayer is the assistant principal second violin with the Minnesota Orchestra. After a relatively short but stressful employment with the Houston Symphony after music school, she joined the then-Minneapolis Symphony in 1976 and has been there ever since. Beginning with that early stint in Houston, she gradually became more and more involved in committee work, including labor relations, ICSOM delegate service, and general activism and muckraking. She has been researching and writing this book for a number of years. It was worth the wait.

What Ms Ayer has written amounts to more than just a history of ICSOM, more than just a history of the Minnesota Orchestra, and more, even, than a history of the AFM. It is a microcosm of labor relations in the music industry during most of the twentieth century.

In discussing the importance of ICSOM, Ms. Ayer quotes an article written by one of the early editors of *Senza Sordino*. In the article, Henry Shaw wrote:

To tell what has transpired since 1962 should become a part of new member orientation. It must be emphasized that ICSOM is an investment and it must be protected. Perhaps an occasional reminder of difficulties that had to be dealt with is in order, along with the admonition that history can surely repeat itself where complacency becomes the order of the day.

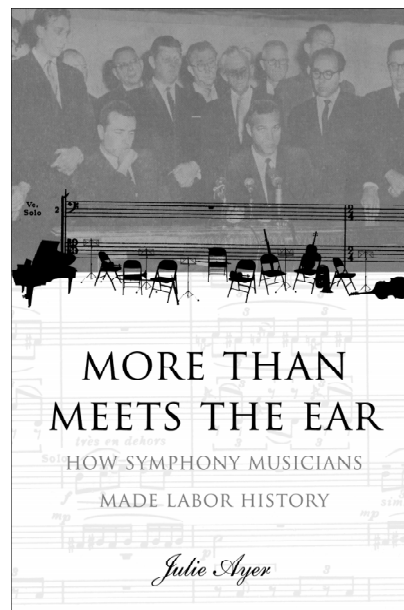
That sentiment is reflected too in Ms. Ayer's description of the origins of *her* fascination with the labor history of symphony musicians. She writes:

When I joined the Houston Symphony Orchestra in the winter of 1976, I had no idea of the problems ready to erupt there. During my brief membership in that orchestra, my eyes were opened to the basic principles of musicians' committee involvement, the importance of speaking with one voice, unanimity of purpose, and strong representative leadership. I realized quickly that no amount of violin practice or freelance experience could have prepared me for all of the nonperformance obligations in an orchestra. Through the impressive example of the Houston musicians, I began to understand the fundamentals of organization, committee work, and labor negotiations. I also began to learn of the history of this labor struggle, not only for the Houston musicians, but for musicians all over the United States and Canada. Six months after my first concert, the Houston Symphony Orchestra management locked out the musicians in a bitter labor dispute. I regretfully left the orchestra to resume auditioning.

The description resonated with me, as I was called in toward the end of that horrible lockout in 1977 to help fashion a settlement that nobody liked, but without which, in my opinion, the orchestra would have folded.

Ms. Ayer gives an eminently readable history of the AFM—including the notorious “Petrillo years,” the agonizing birth of ICSOM, the issue of civil rights, and the bias against women. In addition, she has attached summaries of each negotiation, the participants, and the results of every labor negotiation in the Minnesota Orchestra since 1965. Ms. Ayer describes, in some detail, a number of the more bitter battles with the AFM (e.g., Petrillo and the Chicago Symphony musicians), between musicians and their locals (e.g., the endless battles in Cleveland), and the extraordinary efforts to finally get the musicians of the Boston Symphony Orchestra under union contract. She also identifies and describes the efforts of the founders and early officers of ICSOM. These include the first chairman, George Zasofsky (ironically, from the BSO), the first vice-chairman and second chairman, San Denov (from the Chicago Symphony, who has himself written about his involvement in the deposing of Petrillo and his days as an ICSOM officer), as well as others too numerous to mention here.

In sum, it is indeed a worthwhile read for all labor activists, whether in the music industry or not. I believe it should be required reading for young musicians in conservatories who need to understand that there is one more B after Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms that stands for Bread. Indeed, the book is a perfect kickoff for the implementation of the recent ICSOM resolution calling for the gathering and preservation of as much oral history of ICSOM as is still obtainable from those who founded and nurtured the organization from its earliest days. ||



EMG Reporting

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of any media work, just a lump sum that was added to each season's paycheck to get a little closer to the increases the musicians were demanding. We saw through the ploy, rejected his attempts to hide wages that could be vulnerable at a later date when there was no electronic media work to back up the EMG, and instead got a wage increase that could be built upon during later negotiations.

When my orchestra did accept an EMG, it was because there was guaranteed media work for a number of years to come. We know that this work and the EMG that pays for it could disappear at any time, but for now, since 2001, we have exceeded the EMG each season.

EMGs have been controversial for a long time, and I find myself both defending and decrying EMGs for their current uses. However, if an EMG is nothing more than a bonus to wages, not guaranteeing media work, it should be recognized for what it is and rolled into wages. If an EMG is for media work, it should be used that way. At least one orchestra in recent history has been successful in turning this trend around and incorporated their previous EMG into their wage increase, now agreeing that any media work done in the future will be paid for separately.

ICSOM Counsel Len Leibowitz recently expressed his own concerns about how information is reported. "The purpose of the settlement bulletin," wrote Len, "is neither for crowing nor whining. That can be done at the end, when everybody and his/her mother are being thanked. The primary, if not the only real purpose, goes to the very core value of ICSOM—to share factual information which can be used at some other bargaining table as quickly and accurately as possible. It is terribly embarrassing to cite some 'fact' at another negotiation and have management explain that your information is wrong or incomplete. Thus, the information should be clear, as simply described as possible, and without 'spin.' It should provide the information as to what the previous contract contained and how that has been changed in the new contract. Also, of course, brand new contract provisions should be designated as such."

I should also point out that ICSOM is actively involved, along with the AFM, in working with the ASOL on a project called the Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR). Our hope is that, someday, when we compare budgetary and statistical information from different orchestras, the numbers will actually reflect corresponding data. How can we advocate for that when we don't report to our own colleagues in the same manner? The AFM Wage Charts report wages separately and we should do the same.

When salaries are listed, they never include seniority pay, overscale, etc. EMGs should be treated in the same manner. So, from January 2006 on, all ICSOM bulletins will list EMG wages as separate from regular scale wages. ||

Media Provisions

(continued from page 2)

managements the initiative to "divide and conquer" during tough contract talks. Some orchestras that have followed the bylaw are now quite angry for good reason. Their ability to secure media contracts might be jeopardized because it will be cheaper to hire the orchestras that have negotiated lower "scale" minimums. Also, their credibility with their management is at stake. What do they tell their management after holding firm to a national position, only to have another orchestra break rank soon thereafter? This situation is precisely the type of controversy the bylaw was created to guard against, and precisely the situation that ICSOM has been fighting to prevent.

Even though President Lee did approve some of these media provisions, some were submitted at the end of lengthy negotiations, after a settlement had been reached that hinged on those provisions. That is the equivalent of asking for permission to take a car after you have returned from a long mile trip in it. The intent of the bylaw is to have the language approved before an agreement is made. Not adhering to what the bylaw intends puts other negotiations and other negotiators' trustworthiness at stake. As has already happened, managements will say they were lied to when they were told that a national position was inviolable. As you can imagine, this situation promotes mistrust, and that encourages management to drive wedges between musicians, ICSOM, and the Federation.

So what is the call to action? Chairpersons of orchestra committees, ask your ICSOM delegate what was learned of this situation at the last ICSOM Conference. Call Bill Foster, chairperson of the ICSOM Media Committee, and ask him to help you get what you want. Before going into negotiations, and certainly before coming to agreement on media issues, contact SSD and have a dialogue about what's happening and how best to approach special requests. Make certain that your ICSOM delegate is in contact with ICSOM leadership and with other orchestras. Make sure that your negotiating committee avails itself of those resources. Finally, before going into negotiations, commit to upholding the standards that we, as a musician community, set for ourselves.

ICSOM has always been the leader in fairness and equality within our ranks. We are not isolated when we are in trouble, and we are not isolated in our agreements. We are colleagues, and only through solidarity of purpose will we all flourish. ||

Orchestra Newslets

The **Alabama Symphony** was named “Nonprofit Organization of the Year” at the *Birmingham Business Journal*’s ninth annual *Best In Business Awards* banquet. The Alabama Symphony was the first winner in a new awards category recognizing nonprofits. An independent panel headed by Robert Holmes, dean of the University of Alabama at Birmingham’s School of Business, did the judging.

The orchestra recently named British conductor Justin Brown as their next music director, culminating a search process begun in 2004. Brown will assume his duties in September 2006. Since recovering from bankruptcy in 1997, the Alabama Symphony has grown to employ 72 people in full-time positions. Alabama’s endowment, currently valued at \$11 million, is held by the Alabama Symphonic Endowment, which establishes investment policies and guidelines.

The **Atlanta Symphony**’s 2005–2006 season focuses on composer Osvaldo Golijov. Among the works being performed are *La Pasión según San Marcos* (*The Passion according to St. Mark*) and his opera *Ainamdamar*. Upcoming tours include concerts in Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and California’s Ojai Festival. Fundraising continues for the Symphony Center designed by Santiago Calatrava. Recording projects this year are for Telarc and DGG. The contracts of conductors Robert Spano and Donald Runnicles have been extended through 2008-09.

Atlanta delegate Michael Moore reports that his orchestra saw a 34% increase in healthcare premiums this year. In order to manage that increase, the orchestra changed plans from CIGNA to Aetna. Despite much higher co-pays, Michael says that their medical expense reimbursement plan (MERP) keeps net costs the same to the musicians.

The **Charlotte Symphony** announced that Resident Conductor Alan Yamamoto has extended his contract by two years. This season, their Sunday Summer Pops concerts at Symphony Park were able to remain free to all through the generous commitment of VISA Signature, the series’ presenting sponsor.

Cincinnati Symphony has released two new recordings: Dvorak’s *Symphony No. 9* (with Music Director Paavo Järvi) and Howard Hanson’s *Symphonic Music* (the 80th Pops recording conducted by Erich Kunzel). The Cincinnati Pops Orchestra toured China and Singapore in October, performing two concerts in Beijing, one in Shanghai (as part of the prestigious China Shanghai International Arts Festival), and two in Singapore. Vocalist Daniel Narducci was the guest artist for the tour.

The **Florida Orchestra** completed a successful negotiation last January in which they made substantial recoveries and reasonable gains. The orchestra has posted surpluses for the last two fiscal years, reducing their accumulated deficit to just under \$2 million. According to delegate Warren Powell, the musicians are currently working on a future website to be located at www.floridaorchestramusicians.org. With the Tampa Bay area one of the fastest growing localities in the nation, the musicians want to achieve parity with orchestras of similar demographics through artistic vision and increased activism.

About a month into their season, the **Houston Symphony** endured the drama of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which dominated the nation’s attention. John Thorne writes: “The season does seem off to a good start; attendance is up. The settlement of our contract, even considering it was a ‘reopening,’ seems to have given people a sense of where we are headed.

“The most important thing to note was the generosity of the Dresden Staatskapelle. They flew all the way to Houston to play a concert for the relief workers and refugees from Hurricane Katrina. We were all touched by their generosity and warmth. Unfortunately, Hurricane Rita was bearing down on Houston and most Houstonians were evacuating the city. The free concert was to be well attended, but unfortunately the attendance was affected by the evacuation. However, the concert, on which the Houston Symphony also played, was a memorable one. The members of the Houston Symphony were not only impressed with Dresden’s generosity, but with the beauty of their playing. It is a concert we will all remember for a long time to come. (The Staatskapelle was able to fly out the next morning, Thursday, well in advance of the storm’s arrival on Friday.)”

John Thorne has resigned as delegate to serve on the HSO’s governing board. The new ICSOM delegate is Eric Arbiter.

Delegate John Wieland reports that the **Jacksonville Symphony** has been busy dealing with media issues. They voted against doing a limited pressing due mainly to compensation and scheduling concerns. After much negotiating with management, the orchestra committee came up with a limited pressing package that passed. Management agreed to reduce the service count for the season by the number of sessions. The package also included increased upfront compensation, revenue sharing, and scheduling relief in the week following the recording sessions.

The biggest news in **Kansas City**, according to delegate Jessica Wakefield, is that they have started their first season with their newly appointed music director, Michael Stern. The community is reportedly very excited, and the board seems energized. Concerts with Stern have been well attended. With Stern pounding the pavement to drum up support for the Symphony, the orchestra has been getting good media coverage. This is supposed to be a negotiation year, but there is talk of postponing negotiations until next year. The board has kicked off an endowment campaign, but it’s still too early to tell how it will progress. Concurrently, the orchestra is soliciting donations necessary to break ground for a new performing arts center, hopefully by fall 2007.

As was reported in the last issue of *Senza Sordino*, the **Nashville Symphony** hosted the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra on October 4, 2005 in its first concert since Hurricane Katrina. The performance took place in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center’s Andrew Jackson Hall. Current LPO Principal Guest Conductor Klaus Peter Seibel and Music Director Designate Carlos Miguel Prieto led the majority of the 68-member Louisiana Philharmonic. Gross proceeds from the concert went directly to the Louisiana Philharmonic.

The highly anticipated new Schermerhorn Symphony Center in the heart of downtown Nashville is set to open on September 9, 2006. The 2006–2007 inaugural season of the Schermerhorn Symphony Center will be the most extensive and ambitious of Symphony's 60-year history, with a diverse season of programs suited to the acoustical capabilities of this stunning new hall and embracing Nashville's love for music of all kinds.

North Carolina Symphony musicians saw a significant improvement in their paychecks this fall due to the five-percent salary increase that was negotiated last spring. Their 2006–2007 season began with a pair of concerts inaugurating the newly renovated Memorial Hall at the University of North Carolina's Chapel Hill campus. According to delegate Beth Lunsford, the renovations took three years and included upgrades to the auditorium's interior and the addition of an orchestra shell. This is the third hall inauguration recently played by the NCS, following the openings of Meymandi Concert Hall (NCS's new home hall in Raleigh) and Booth Amphitheatre (NCS's summer home at Regency Park in Cary).

Delegate Emily Watkins reports that the **San Antonio Symphony** has hired Dick Hoffert, formerly CEO of the North Carolina and Indianapolis symphonies, to replace Eddie Aldrete as interim CEO. Aldrete had previously accepted the position in a complicated arrangement with his employer, but he recently became unavailable due to unrelated complications with that employer. He will continue to serve the San Antonio Symphony as a board member. The CEO search committee, which includes two musician representatives to the board, is using a local headhunter to research candidates for the permanent position. The goal is to have a new CEO in place before spring.

Another management change is the appointment of a marketing director, a position that had been empty for three years. The position of CFO has also been recently filled, having been empty since around the time of the orchestra's bankruptcy. Searches continue for the posts of development director and marketing director. Musicians are hopeful that the filling of these positions will help the San Antonio Symphony in its recovery and growth.

The **Dallas Symphony** is playing with Andrew Litton in his final season as music director, a post he has held since 1994. No successor has been named. This past October under Litton's baton, the DSO received the Gramophone Editor's Choice Award for a recording of the Rachmaninoff piano concertos with Stephen Hough.

On the financial front, they have seen two consecutive years of balanced budgets, a 19% growth in annual donations over the last three years, and a 43% increase in endowment during the same time. The endowment is now slightly over \$100 million. However, the musicians recently dodged a financial bullet after an initial healthcare premium quote showed an 18% increase. All were relieved that the healthcare broker negotiated the rate to about \$8,000 below the negotiated cap (12%). Even so, the healthcare committee recommended making changes to the PPO's out-of-pocket maximum and to the

out-of-network coinsurance in order to protect the musicians from a large premium increase in the future. The orchestra voted to accept those changes.

The Dallas Symphony found a number of ways to contribute to Hurricane Katrina relief. In cooperation with the Dallas Arts District, they hosted a donation drop for clothing and money to be donated to displaced disaster victims. They also placed containers in their lobby for donations to the Red Cross throughout September. Additionally, they held a benefit concert on September 27th with David R. Davidson, conductor of the DSO chorus, their new associate conductor, Danail Rachev, and baritone Timothy Jones. In total, they raised approximately \$10,000 for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The musicians of the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** went "live" with their own website in October, just before leaving on a 12-day, seven-concert tour of Spain, Italy, Slovenia, and Austria with their departing music director, Yuri Temirkanov. The site, www.bsomusicians.org, was designed to complement their employer's website and initially served as a travelogue for the tour. Now it will provide on-going and in-depth information about the orchestra's musicians and the music they play. A special "sneak preview" section features brief enticements and photographs for music lovers who want an insider's view of what's happening each week at the BSO. Visitors to the site will be able to express their views directly to the musicians through the area entitled "Everyone's a Critic." The musicians, who are funding the site themselves, appreciated a generous gift from Local 40-543, the Musicians' Association of Metropolitan Baltimore, to help their effort. Their continued volunteer efforts will keep the site fresh for visitors.

The musicians are looking forward to welcoming Maestra Marin Alsop to Baltimore in January for her first concerts with the orchestra since being appointed their music director. Their collective bargaining agreement will expire in mid-September 2006. The musicians have retained a local communications specialist and legal counsel Susan Martin.

These reports, with the exception of Baltimore's, were compiled by ICSOM Governing Board Member at Large James Nickel from information supplied by each orchestra's delegate. The Baltimore Symphony report was contributed by delegate Mary Plaine in consultation with Member at Large Nancy Stutsman.

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

Our Past

(continued from page 1)

or by one means. While our music interpretations are linked to the past, we must find relevant ways to communicate the importance of what we do to our contemporary audiences. We cannot expect ads that simply announce our performances and their contents to attract people who have never heard a Beethoven symphony.

The message must be everywhere present, and it must be told by those who believe most in the message: the audience and the musicians (including the live composers). The message must be of an emotional nature that evokes a desire to experience whatever it is those telling the story are so excited about. Also, the message should not be spread only by paid marketing. We must find ways to make people so excited about what they experience at concerts that they become our ambassadors within our communities.

Throughout what I have said thus far, I hope two principles stand out clearly. The first is that we should embrace the past and all it brings to the present. The second is that we must not be afraid to look for new solutions to our problems. Taken together, these principles lead us to another one: When we are looking for new solutions, we must remain mindful of the past. We should not throw away everything we know just to be different. Even when Schönberg invented atonal music, it was done in a historical context, as a reaction to what came before, with the goal of creating more of what had always been valued: music that connects with people. Playing to large pops audiences may help fund the core of what we do, but it can never substitute for it.

When translated to the nonmusical activities our orchestra committees now perform, the same principles apply. Even when today's problems bear a striking resemblance to those of the past, new solutions suited to today's world may be necessary. At the same time, we should always be mindful of what has come before, what has worked, what hasn't, why different solutions were tried, and why they did or did not work.

This brings me, albeit in a roundabout way, to why I am writing this article: a newly published book by Minnesota Orchestra violinist Julie Ayer. The book, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History*, is a history of us and of our industry. It chronicles the evolution of the American orchestra. It takes us from our meager beginnings to today, when more orchestras than ever before are able to provide a living wage to more musicians than ever before. As such, it is also a history of ICSOM and its founders.

One must admire the research that went into this book. Although I consider myself fairly well versed in the history of American orchestras and the problems musicians have overcome, I was appalled by my lack of knowledge of many of the topics Julie covers. If you'd like to test your own knowledge of our history, I've compiled a short quiz. I've included answers, but I hope they will stimulate you to read the book, which really does give these and many other subjects the full treatment they deserve.

Quiz

You will find short answers to the quiz on the next page. Much better answers will be found throughout More Than Meets the Ear.

1. Which AFM president had previously been an officer of the rival American Musicians Union?
2. What was the Lea Act?
3. What was CMUD?
4. Which was the last major American orchestra to unionize?
5. The president of which orchestra in 1944 told a fund-raising meeting attended mostly by women that unless sufficient money were raised, the orchestra would be forced to "lower its standards" by hiring female musicians?
6. When was the first merger of white and black AFM locals?
7. When did the St. Louis locals integrate?
8. How many orchestras offered full-time employment in 1958? In 1976?
9. What was the MGA?
10. Which foundation made large grants to American orchestras in the 1960's?

For all the history it covers, *More Than Meets the Ear* does not read like a dry history book. It is full of interesting anecdotes and amusing stories. Some of the pictures are heartwarming. There are many quotes—from orchestra musicians, conductors, managers, negotiators, and critics. There are also stories written from Julie's own personal perspective, both as a violinist and as someone with interesting connections to other notable musicians.

Some of the book is devoted to the Minnesota Orchestra. You will read about Minnesota's tours, its recordings, and its labor negotiations. It is illuminating to notice how many of the struggles the

Minnesota Orchestra faced during its growth have recurred in other orchestras at other times. Contract terms that we now take for granted as foundations of our current contracts are reflections of other struggles faced by orchestras, including Minnesota, in the past. When the issues discussed pertain mainly to the Minnesota Orchestra, Julie has interspersed many comments from negotiators and orchestra musicians about the negotiations and about interesting episodes that occurred during the seasons.

For those who need convincing that the past is relevant to the present and that the battles fought before are in many ways the same battles faced today, I offer excerpts from a 1928 *Chicago Daily News* editorial (Julie's book has the complete version):

Ten months ago *The Daily News* by appealing to friends of the Chicago Symphony orchestra raised a fund of \$30,000 which helped to give another season of useful life to that fine organization.... Nothing, however, seems to have been done since then to prevent a recurrence of the controversy over the orchestra's minimum wage scale. No guaranty has been provided, no additional endowment has been obtained by the orchestral association,.... and no additional use of the orchestra to furnish increased revenue has been arranged for. Consequently the association asserts once more that it cannot meet the musicians' demand for a minimum weekly wage of \$90. So it appears to have decreed the dissolution of the orchestra, one of the best in the world and for many years an intellectual and artistic necessity to Chicago's host of music lovers.... It seems clear, however, that the association's effort to retain the minimum wage scale of two years ago is unreasonable. The controlling members of the association are singularly self-centered while they hold the fate of the orchestra in their hands. It is not their orchestra to dispose of as they please. They occupy a position of trust, administering.... a semipublic institution.... The statement of the orchestral association that its failure to rent Orchestra hall justifies its refusal to give its musicians the wages they ask is no suitable response to the union's demand. Manifestly it is unfair to make the members of the orchestra suffer for a failure in management. The orchestral association faces serious problems with which its management seems unable to cope.... [M]any friends of the orchestra are ready and anxious to support intelligent and effective leadership such as is required in the existing emergency. If the present directing heads... fail to solve the problem... it may be assumed that a reorganized body will provide properly for the future of the orchestra through effective administration and, if necessary, through open solicitation of an increased endowment. It would be a great pity, however, if there should be even a temporary disbanding of the splendid corps of highly trained musicians....

More Than Meets the Ear is an important book for our field. There is a wealth of information that helps us understand our roots and how we arrived where we are today. Orchestra committees would be well advised to offer a copy to all of their colleagues, and especially to their new ones, as an understanding of what and who came before can greatly increase the unity necessary when today's orchestras face their own inevitable struggles. ||

Leibowitz

(continued from page 3)

business? After all, they are supposed to be the experts, indeed, the "trustees" of the financial health of the community. As the old business slogan goes, "If it's good for General Motors, it's good for America." If that is true, ought it not to be those running "General Motors" to tell us what impact music and other visual and performing arts have made, and continue to make, to the fiscal common good? But, instead, in today's North American society, it has become the artists themselves who must be the sales personnel of their art form in the context of its economic value rather than the intrinsic value of their passion, their talent, and their ability to take the rest of us down the paths to some of life's finest moments.

At 5:18 AM, I had to respond:

Wow... Yes, Lenny, of course I agree with you. I wish I could include in my 250-word-limit response to the editor such an eloquent appeal to the recognition of beauty as I have just read from you. But, as I know you understand, my response is to an article that suggests that there isn't enough money. And I just want to write back to say that there is.

Of course, even if it was not good for business there would still be the compelling argument that you have made. But for the op-ed page of a business section of a local newspaper, there

(continued on page 12—see LEIBOWITZ)

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| 1. | James C. Pettillo (also known as the "Little Caesar"). |
| 2. | Federal legislation, largely against the AFM and its president, James Pettillo, passed in 1946. Also known as the "anti-Pettillo act," it was declared unconstitutional in 1947. |
| 3. | The Chicago Musicians for Union Democracy was started in 1961 by members of Chicago's Local 10 to fight the autocracy of their local and its president James Pettillo. Because of the mistreatment Chicago Symphony musicians received from Pettillo and their local, many CSO musicians joined CMUD. |
| 4. | The Boston Symphony Orchestra, in 1942. |
| 5. | Boston. |
| 6. | 1953, in Los Angeles. |
| 7. | 1971. |
| 8. | None, but Boston Symphony was the closest, with 46 weeks of employment in 1958. By 1976 there were 11 52-week orchestras. |
| 9. | The Musicians Guild of America was a rival union to the AFM formed in 1958 by recording musicians. Its success was largely responsible for the end of Pettillo's tenure as AFM president. |
| 10. | The Ford Foundation. |

Excerpts from
More Than Meets the Ear:
How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History
by Julie Ayer

As described by the author, Julie Ayer, More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History is the story of a grassroots movement that transformed labor relations and the professional lives of U.S. and Canadian symphony musicians. McCarthyism and segregation within the musicians union, women's issues, and the founding of the NEA and Ford Foundation Symphony Program are included in this important labor history. Also documented in vivid detail are the Minneapolis Symphony/Minnesota Orchestra labor negotiations from 1960–2004. Below are excerpts from the book.

From the Preface:

This book is a chronicle of symphony musicians' historic struggle toward improving and enriching their professional lives. The countless anecdotes and stories that were told again and again among colleagues, family, and friends in the late 1950s, '60s and early '70s have become part of the collective folklore, informing and often entertaining each new generation. My Minneapolis colleagues related countless stories of orchestra life and the challenges of contract negotiations: the behind-the-scenes dramas that even then many musicians took for granted. I learned that notwithstanding the professional artistic fulfillment of orchestral involvement, they had found lives of financial hardship, no job security, difficult working conditions, grueling tours, dictatorial conductors, and a nonrepresentational union.

I came to realize that the background to these stories was an important part of the musicians' labor history that was evaporating with the passage of time. There was no cohesive documentation of the real drama of the grassroots labor movement that had transformed the lives of professional orchestra musicians.

...

This book is not intended as an exposé. Conductors, managers, and union leaders are mentioned anecdotally and in the context of contractual issues. The musicians' activism had a profound effect on their professional lives as well.

Nor is this book intended as a definitive history of ICSOM. Archivist Tom Hall, a member of the Chicago Symphony, has assembled *Forty Years of ICSOM* for all of the member orchestras. I do not presume to offer that kind of detail here.

On a summer day in 1997, I began to document the movement that had led to the formation, thirty-five years previously, of ICSOM. My husband, Carl Nashan, and I—both violinists with the Minnesota Orchestra—had organized a gathering of former and current members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (the CSO). We met at

Ravinia, the CSO's summer home. The third host of the reunion, Carl's brother, Rudy, moderated the discussion and conversations among the assembled musicians, some of whom had not seen each other for many years.

As I listened and took notes, the musicians began to reminisce and recall the historic meeting of the representatives from twelve major symphony and opera orchestras who had, at their own expense, convened in Chicago in May 1962 to discuss issues of mutual concern. That meeting, which had produced ICSOM, signified the transition to a major era in labor relations and in the symphony orchestra profession.

...

Their remarkable stories, their vivid anecdotes, and their passionate language changed my intentions that day. Originally thinking that I could help new generations of symphony musicians understand and appreciate their collective history, I now realized that my CSO colleagues were telling the story of a unique grassroots labor movement that had meaning for a much broader audience. Their story can continue to inspire us all.

The crucial role of a few visionary militants of the Chicago and Cleveland orchestras in this national story derived from their willingness to do battle at great personal risk with the formidable adversaries of their orchestra managements and with Musicians Union president James C. Petrillo, one of the most powerful union leaders in America. In the end, they succeeded in deposing Petrillo, and Chicago became one of the last orchestras in the country to form a musicians representative committee—a basic union right that had long eluded symphony musicians.

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From Chapter Three—Struggle and Activism, 1950–1962: Petrillo Challenged and Defeated:

Following the Ravinia cutbacks and foreign tour cancellation of 1959, the Chicago players committee sought the counsel of an attorney. During one of their meetings, a CSO manager evicted the committee from Orchestra Hall on the grounds that the presence of a lawyer was forbidden, as was any players meeting with more than three participants.

Management also forbade the posting in Orchestra Hall of any committee announcements. They put the company bulletin board under lock and key to prohibit meeting notices from being posted. So the musicians found a creative way to avoid trespassing on the property and make a point at the same time. They wrote notices of meetings on bits of paper attached to helium balloons and floated

them backstage. Management could not prohibit air space in Orchestra Hall.

...

Opposition to Petrillo extended beyond symphony musicians and their supporters. In 1961, a diverse group of Local 10 musicians formed an organization called Chicago Musicians for Union Democracy, or CMUD, which comprised diverse groups of musicians throughout Local 10. All were fed up with the autocracy of their local, but only the symphony players had the advantage of being together day after day. Through the symphony players committee they could bring collective pressure to bear against the union. Like the Cleveland players, they were inspired by the passing of the Landrum-Griffin Act, which in addition to guaranteeing the right of union members to express any view, argument, or opinion regarding the conduct of union affairs, mandated a union election of officers before 1963. "There were about six of us 'personae non gratae' who went around the block to Toffenetti's Restaurant, where we held secret meetings in a back room," hornist Wayne Barrington recalled. A group of symphony and freelance musicians began discussing plans to contest the upcoming election, the first such effort since 1917. Inexperienced in the ways of formal union procedure, they hired a parliamentarian to coach them. Sixty CSO musicians held a preliminary session to inform themselves of union bylaws and review Robert's Rules of Order. "It was revolutionary. We were determined to inform ourselves," remembered Joe Golan.

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From Chapter Four—The Birth of ICSOM: A Labor Revolution:

In early September 1962, the musicians who had attended the historic Chicago conference in May came together in Cleveland with a widening network of orchestra players for the formal ratification of the creation of ICSOM, the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians. The organization's founding members were the principal orchestras of Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Metropolitan Opera, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Rochester, Saint Louis, and Toronto.

The Cleveland meeting set the mission statement of the new organization, which would provide the first effective forum for symphony musicians to talk and work together for the benefit of all. Boston Symphony Orchestra Assistant Concertmaster George Zazofsky, the first president-elect and a dedicated leader in the ICSOM effort, told the *Boston Globe* several years later, "It was a further objective to direct continuous co-operative efforts within the framework of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO."

It was a time of great pride for the musicians involved. Zazofsky's daughter, Erika, forty years later came to appreciate the full extent of what he and his colleagues accomplished. At the time, in the early 1960s, she remembers, she was unaware of its impact on the symphony orchestra profession and of her own role in it. Perched on her father's bed with a Smith-Corona manual typewriter, Erika typed as her father dictated the letters he wrote to various musicians throughout the country. "He was not highly educated, so he asked me to help with the syntax and sentence structure after he formulated the ideas he was trying to convey. It was quite ordinary for me to help him in this way, and I thought nothing of it until years later, when I realized what I had passively participated in. My father and the others, who stuck their necks out, were the true radicals of their day. They did not realize it then, but when I look back at what they accomplished, and the status of orchestral musicians today, they were truly free thinkers."

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From Chapter Eleven—Reflections:

The growth of ICSOM has helped the individual player to the degree that the younger players will never understand. It was an incredible effort made in those days. Informing the new members of the hard-won battles of the last three decades is of paramount importance. If they are given the knowledge of how things came to be, and that the wages, pension, and benefits they now enjoy were not given to them by the employers, they will not be equipped to continue making progress. None of these achievements occurred in a vacuum. The musicians and their counsel now negotiated with managements that were willing or had no choice but to acknowledge their presence at the table. And with the shift in power came the responsibility of representation and ratification that accompanied it.

—I. Philip Sipser, ICSOM labor lawyer, 1968-1985

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From Chapter Eleven—Reflections:

Originating as a dissident group of disgruntled symphony musicians in 1962, ICSOM has become perhaps the single most powerful force in the AFM. I sometimes wonder how James Petrillo would have dealt with them. In any event, the lot of symphony, opera, and ballet musicians, and, I believe, all union musicians, has been immeasurably improved by the existence and influence of ICSOM. Despite the problems of the field in recent years, symphony, opera, and ballet jobs are still among the steadiest, highest compensated, and most respected in the music business. This alone is vivid testimony to ICSOM's achievements.

—Leonard Leibowitz, ICSOM labor lawyer

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Leibowitz

(continued from page 9)

is also the convenient truth that art is, in fact, good for business.

Yes, it should be those running “General Motors” (or the equivalent) telling us that it is good for us to support the arts. But in the face of the rhetoric of structural deficits and diminishing relevance, I feel an obligation to instruct those business leaders on just how to make our argument.

But still, I am delighted to read your missive. And now, I think I might actually turn off my computer and go to sleep for a few hours.

And then, a mere 15 minutes later, Len responded:

And, of course, would that I were naïve enough to not fully appreciate your reasoning in writing this article. That’s why the ruefulness of my reply started with the fact that I *wished* it was not necessary for us to be bringing those economic realities to Newcastle.

It is also true that I am glad to have found a quiet moment like this sleepless night to ruminate on that which is so much more important than spending my days struggling with those economic realities.

G’nite Bruce, and thanks for being up so late tonight and for sharing these nether moments.

While Len Leibowitz is no doubt a legendary figure in our industry, I wonder how many of us have really considered the depth of his dedication to our art.

But don’t get me wrong. I am not suggesting that I have always agreed with everything Len has ever said or done. And, I suspect that he would want me to hasten to point out that he has not always agreed with me either. But, I have learned from, and I have benefited (as have all of you) from both knowing of, and actually knowing, Leonard Leibowitz.

It is indisputably true that if you have ever paid an electric bill by holding a musical instrument, then you owe Lenny a debt of gratitude. ||

Contributions to the Leonard Leibowitz Defense Fund, established by resolution at the 2005 ICSOM Conference, should be sent to ICSOM, 953 Rosedale Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.
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