

Intermezzo

2fm
chicago federation of musicians
local 10-208 afm

Virtual Membership Meeting:
Monday, January 11th, 2021
@ 6:00 pm

November/December 2020
Vol. 80 No. 9



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CFM Recommendations for Safety in the Workplace

We have spent the Fall negotiating modifications to most of our collective bargaining agreements for the 2020-2021 season to accommodate the changes in rehearsals and performances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many "live performances" have transitioned to streaming recorded content on places such as the employer's website, Facebook and YouTube. In addition to negotiating the media payments for this work, we had the task of negotiating Return to Work Safety Guidelines to protect the musicians who are doing this new work.

For freelance musicians, there are few collective bargaining agreements. This work is negotiated by a leader/contractor and filed with the union on a Musical Services Contract. It is the responsibility of the leader/contractor to discuss safety guidelines with the employer and get the approval of the union. Each engagement has different requirements and every venue must be treated individually. The union has put together

"recommended" safety guidelines for you to use when discussing the terms of employment during the negotiation of your contract. You should begin by checking on the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the State, County and City rules. These should be followed. In addition, these guidelines of the CFM will help you as you navigate this new dimension of live/recorded performances. If you should have any questions or need help, please feel free to contact the union and we will help you work through this new requirement of employment.

Holiday Cheer!

In this most unusual year of a pandemic, many of us will not be spending time with our friends and family. Although we may be apart this year, we can look forward to a time in the near future when we will all be together again. I would like to extend my warm wishes to each of you for a joyous holiday season and a very different and prosperous New Year. Please be safe and well.

Chicago Federation of Musicians Recommended Health and Safety Guidelines for Live Engagement Updated 10.30.20

Anyone feeling unwell, exhibiting any possible signs of COVID-19 or having been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the previous 14 days should refrain from participating in any event.

The following guidelines are set forth by the Chicago Federation of Musicians for Casual Live Engagements. More restrictive guidelines set by City, County and State governments will supersede anything contained in this document. It is the duty of the contractor/leader of any engagement, prior to performing any service, to discuss these guidelines with the musicians and employer and agree to the safety terms.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever of 100.4 degrees or above, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing; other flu-like symptoms, such as gastrointestinal upset, headache or fatigue, recent loss of taste or smell.

The following guidelines, whether indoor or outdoor events, are required:

- Musicians and guests must agree to wear masks during entire time at venue.
- Musicians will be properly distanced (at least six feet for strings and percussion and eight to ten feet for winds and brass)
- Each musician will have their own stand/music.
- All guests will be required to remain six feet apart from the musicians with socially distanced markings put on floor/ground to keep guests separated from the musicians.
 - The leader will have hand sanitizer available to every musician or require that each musician carry their own hand sanitizer, which will be used frequently throughout the event.
 - Musicians will have a designated unpacking space to store their belongings (separate from guests), properly distanced from others and in a secure location. The space will have tables and chairs where cases and belongings may be left and the musician can rest when not performing.
 - Musicians should refrain from bringing personal items other than instruments, stands and music necessary for the job to avoid COVID transmission.
- Public restrooms will be cleaned regularly, particularly high-contact surfaces.
- As much as is possible, at indoor events, doors will be open to allow for minimum surface contact and for airflow exchange.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 less than 72 hours after the completion of the event, all individuals who may have been in "close contact" (less than six feet of distance for 15 minutes or more) with the infected person will be notified.



FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

LEO MURPHY

A Few Thoughts

For the past month, the CFM has supported several worker actions held by other unions. In early October, a rally was held in front of Union Station to raise awareness of the lack of funding for Amtrak. The result of this is the reduction of routes and schedules across the nation and laying off rail workers. The union representing those workers, SMART (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation workers), reached out to the CFM asking for some musicians to support that rally. The musician participation was greatly appreciated by SMART. Likewise, at the end of October, UNITE HERE Local 1 (representing workers employed by Chartwells on the DePaul campus) held a rally in support of those workers. The CFM and UNITE HERE have a long history of helping one another and this time was no exception. CFM members Rob Curtis and Brian Patti led the marchers around the campus as the group showed support for the laid-off workers.

The Music Performance Trust Fund awarded 125 scholarships across the United States and Canada. The parents of 13 of these recipients are members of Local 10-208. Within this issue is a short article about the awards and these winners. Take a second to read the article and see the recipients' names.

We have a one-year extension with the Goodman Theatre. The agreement was ratified in early September and keeps all wages (rehearsal and performance) at the current rates (no increase in dollar amounts). What it does achieve is an increase to the pension contribution rate, raising it to the mandated amount set by the AFM-EP Fund with its most recent Rehabilitation Plan, which went into effect in July of 2018. There are no changes to work rules or conditions. This agreement will expire on August 31, 2021 and as that date approaches, we will see what that part of our industry is doing and start prepping for negotiations with the Goodman.

This article is being written in early November, but I realize that this is my opportunity to wish you all a wonderful holiday season. Our Thanksgiving, Christmas and/or Hanukkah and New Year's will be quite different this year. But I will be trying to remember what usually brings us together for these holidays and find some way to keep that spirit this year. Video calls or just phone calls with loved ones are ways I will be trying to connect with them on the holidays, all the while being thankful for them still being in my life. Happy Holidays.



In early October a rally was held in front of Union Station in support of adequate funding for Amtrak. Amtrak is reducing many routes around the country, including the Midwest. SMART (representing Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation workers) held this early morning event and asked the CFM to provide some music. Members Russ Knutsen and Bruce Nelson provided rhythmic interludes to accompany the chants and marching that occurred throughout the rally.



Membership and Finances

I continue to be proud of all of you and the resilience you have shown through this most difficult year. For my part, managing the finances of the union along with the advice of our accountants and investment managers continues to be a monumental task. First, a bit of good news. The Chicago Federation of Labor continues to be an amazing source of support for our members. Recently they included us in a food security program that was able to provide fresh and frozen groceries to a number of our members in need. If you are experiencing food insecurity, please contact me immediately so you can be included in any future events. Your request is always confidential. Also, the United Way of Metro Chicago has agreed to make a donation to our M-HART program. We are awaiting details of the gift, and we are eager to continue what was a very successful first iteration of the program.

You will all receive your billing for 2021 membership dues soon. Enclosed will be a letter from the officers and board, but I want to thank you all in advance for your support and understanding. If we could keep the doors open without yearly membership dues, we would not be sending you a bill at this most difficult time. I have spoken

to hundreds of you on the phone this year and know that there is a wide spectrum of experiences that our members are going through. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please call any of us here at the union. We want to know, and will try to find ways to help.

As to union finances, we have applied for a Small Business Association loan of \$150,000. The rate is well below the return we are seeing on our investment portfolio, so our accountant has advised us to pursue the loan and also establish a line of credit so that we are not drawing down too dramatically on the principal of the CFM investment account. We will also be starting the 2021 budget process in December this year rather than January as would be the normal practice. It will be a challenge to present a balanced budget, but that is our mandate and I will work toward that end.

Thank you all for the messages of support, and for your continued dedication. Should you want to discuss CFM finances my phone is always open, as are the books of the union. This house is your house. My best to you and your families. May this holiday season bring you happiness, healing and hope for the future.



On the morning of October 29, 2020, UNITE HERE Local 1 held a celebration for All Saints Day and in support of the workers of Chartwells who provide the food service at DePaul University. Those workers have been laid off during the pandemic and their healthcare through their employer is being cut off. CFM members Rob Curtis (banjo) and Brian Patti (clarinet) played in support of the event and the workers as the group marched through the DePaul campus. UNITE HERE is in negotiations with Chartwells at this time.



Fernando Jones:

Chicago Bluesman Reflects on Growing up on the South Side, Staying Relevant While in Quarantine and the Future of the Music Industry

Fernando Jones, Chicago blues musician, educator and artist, is nattily dressed. During this time of quarantine, when most of us spend our endless days in sweatpants, the Chicago Blues Hall of Famer is wearing a black turtleneck, slacks, sport coat and his trademark fedora. His wardrobe reflects his approach to life and career: there are standards to be maintained, even in the face of a pandemic with no end in sight. There is still music to be written, blues to play, a new generation of students to teach and opportunities to replace the ones that COVID has taken away.

Growing up on Michigan Avenue and 60th Street on the South Side of Chicago, Jones' devotion to music began at age four when he taught himself to play his brother's guitar. "I was fascinated by the physics of sound, the beauty of the woodgrain on our family Wurlitzer organ (which he still has today), the female shape of the guitar." Another motivation: his three older brothers, who were musicians. "I loved them so much that if I could play guitar and drums well enough, I could hang with my brothers more," he said. "That was the 'engine' behind my desire to get better at this. I learned to play by ear, didn't read music, didn't even know what a metronome was. If you didn't have a tape recorder handy, you had to learn very fast. That's why I've written over 2,000 songs," he laughs. "I figure that way, if I write my own songs and sing my own words, people can't tell me that I'm wrong."

Jones built up his performance chops through high school, moving from backyard concerts to performing in high school talent shows and neighborhood parties. After graduation he enrolled at the University of Illinois at Chicago. While there, he saw an opportunity. "The school was bringing in talent like Roy Ayres and Shalimar to perform, so I thought, 'Well, if they're bringing these folks up here, I want to know how I can bring up some blues guys.' I started putting on blues festivals as an undergrad. I had my own band and I brought in Buddy Guy, Koko Taylor, Junior Wells. It was really cool."

Jones' career as a preeminent blues educator started shortly after graduating from University of Illinois in 1987, when he began substitute teaching in Chicago Public Schools. "I'd bring my guitar to school with me



Photos courtesy of Sharon Jones

(Continued on next page)

when I was teaching. Then the kids and teachers found out that I was a musician, so I started playing for the class when lessons were done on some Fridays. Then a light bulb went off and next thing you know, I got a CPS vendor number and started getting hired to do school concerts." In 1988, Jones founded the Blues Kids of America program to teach young people about the blues' history, performance and pedagogy.

It was during this time that Jones began writing an article meant for Ebony magazine about the Chicago blues scene. They passed, but by the time the rejection letter arrived, he had interviewed so many musicians, fans and club owners he soon had enough material to expand into a book. He published "[I Was There When the Blues Was Red Hot: The Importance of the Blues from a Sociological and Historical Perspective with a Focus on the Future](#)" in February 1990. "That book opened doors for me because most books that are written about the blues are not written by Black musicians, so I got a lot of attention." This led to invitations from around the country to lecture on the status of Black music in America and speak at a conference for the National Alliance for Black School Educators (NABSE). He joined the faculty of Columbia College as Blues Ensemble Director in 2005.

One of Jones' most notable accomplishments is the establishment of his [Blues Camp](#) in 2010. The camp, for kids ages 12-18, is a free, summertime, week-long series of lessons, performances and presentations from eminent figures in the blues community. "I was on campus at Columbia College, and I saw that they had a lot of jazz camps and jazz workshops. I thought, hey, I could create something for blues." These have proven to be so popular that he has brought the program to Tokyo, Havana, London and throughout the United States.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jones had to find a way to make this year's camp virtual. "We set up a portal through Blackboard and I enlisted a company called Emerging Light Media to make it into a TV show. And we brought in special guests like Morris Hayes (Prince's longest serving band member and music director); Steve Jordan, who played drums on Letterman, was a bandleader for Keith Richards' tours and stood in for Charlie Watts; and some of my colleagues: Felton Crews, Jackie Scott and Adam Gusso. It's usually six-hour sessions every day during in-person camp, so in order to keep the kids' attention online, we shortened the time to two hours."

It worked out well. "Forty-seven kids attended, and after the first day, the kids didn't want to leave! I was like, hey guys, I'm keeping my word about letting you go at 11! But a lot of kids and parents would stick around to ask questions."

Until a vaccine is developed, Jones says he wants to be "clothed in my right mind and not go stir crazy while dodging COVID." He continues to be active as a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, a primarily African American fraternity. Serving the community in Woodlawn, the chapter holds food drives and provides college scholarships. During the election, members gave out water and snacks to the lines of people at the polls. And having time off hasn't been too bad. "I have never been home this long in my life, but you know what? I like watching "The Flintstones" at 5 o'clock every day. I laugh just like I was a kid!"

However, it's important to him to stay current. "Hopefully I can continue to write some pretty good songs and try to take advantage of technology. The club thing is gone for now, so how do I remain

relevant? I gotta make videos, I gotta create content, I gotta be on Facebook.

"One of the things I did to help me cope was create a video series called the [Midnight Music Mix](#). The interviews are five minutes long, and I ask three questions: what is music to you; how does life impact your music-making experiences; and how does life during the COVID pandemic impact how you listen to music nowadays?"

Another project was the completion a trilogy based on racial unrest in America called "Born Too Brown". The [first part](#) is a poem inspired by Colin Kaepernick taking a knee in protest of police violence against Black people. Part II is another poem, written after the murder of George Floyd last May in Minneapolis. The third is a song called "[Born Too Brown](#)", composed last September. It was written after Jacob Blake had been shot seven times in the back last August by Kenosha police, leaving him paralyzed.

Jones has had his own experiences with the police. In one incident, he was pulled over by three officers after teaching a night class at Columbia. "Three cops had pulled me over, asking about my car, saying it had been seen around the neighborhood. This was before shootings were recorded on iPhones and shown on TV. I had never seen three cops at the same time before, and I was thinking, as a Black man, 'I know I'm gonna die.' They didn't pull me over to give me a ticket; they stopped me to kick butt. They talked to me for 10 minutes, which was a lifetime. Luckily I had a receipt from the parking lot outside school that showed the car had been there since 1pm. That receipt was the only thing that saved me." Another time, a white officer claimed Jones' car had been stolen and insisted he show him the keys. The officer was holding him at gunpoint.

"So when you ask about Black Lives Matter and the civil unrest, I understand it firsthand."

As for the future of the music industry post-pandemic, Jones believes, "Nothing is normal until 2022. The industry is going to have to adapt to the times. It's not going to be the way that it was. It's like vinyl giving way to CDs and then to streaming. Maybe the next phase of performance will be video. I know nothing takes the place of festivals, but concert promoters who have taken a big hit financially might not jump out and invest in festivals right away. You're going to have to ease back into it. Some club owners might be asking themselves if they want to go back to running a club. However, if you've got 20-somethings who have a nice business plan, there will be new venues. I think that some young person in college right now is probably figuring out a way to present music in a new way.

"For musicians who are pretty good and are do-it-yourselfers and are familiar with social media, they're on par with bigger stars who have the tech to keep going. If you can create content and develop a fan base, it is as important as anything Janet Jackson or Eric Clapton or Christina Aguilera can put out there, because nobody can go out and perform right now. This is the time to show how good you really think you are."

This December, Emerging Light Media will record Jones conducting his first-ever master class on blues, funk and more for guitar, bass, harmonica, vocals, drums and MIDI keyboards. This project will include lesson plans, anecdotes and a roadmap to being the maximum player one wants to be. Please go to <https://www.fernandojones.com/> for more information.



Performers Music, located in the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue, is the oldest sheet music purveyor in the city. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a sudden and substantial impact on their business since they primarily rely on foot traffic. However, they are still taking phone and online orders. Please consider buying your music from Performers Music. <https://www.performersmusicchicago.com>. Thank you!

Minutes from every board meeting are available to members on the CFM website. Please log in and click the “CFM Board of Directors Meeting Minutes” link at right.



My 26 Weeks of Unemployment Benefits Are Running Out: What Now?

When the pandemic shut down theaters and performance venues back in March, many musicians found themselves without the ability to perform. Despite challenges with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) and uncertainty about federal unemployment programs, by now most eligible musicians have applied for and received either regular unemployment benefits or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) to assist them in this difficult time. We all hoped things would be back to normal by the end of 2020, but unfortunately the COVID case counts in Illinois are higher than ever, and there is no end in sight to the live performance hiatus caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This may leave musicians wondering – how long can I rely on unemployment benefits to help me through?

Under Illinois law, individuals can receive unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks in a benefit year. These weeks do not have to be consecutive. Practically, this means that anyone who qualifies for regular unemployment benefits can receive payments for any week in which they did not earn more than their weekly benefit amount, up to 26 times before the year anniversary of their application for benefits. Individuals who qualify for PUA under the CARES Act are also entitled to 26 weeks of PUA benefits under similar parameters, although as of now, the PUA program will end on December 31, 2020. The CARES Act also provides a benefit called Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). PEUC provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits to both regular and PUA benefit recipients through December 31, 2020. IDES has been automatically transitioning unemployed individuals who have used 26 weeks of benefits to PEUC – many musicians may already be receiving it. However, unless Congress acts to extend the CARES Act provisions, PEUC will not be available in 2021.

Section 409 of the Illinois Unemployment Insurance Act provides for additional extended benefits to those individuals who are eligible for regular benefits. Extended benefits are available during periods of time, such as now, when the unemployment rate is high. Normally, this program provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits. However, in August, Governor Pritzker extended this program for up to 20 weeks if individuals remain eligible. Because extended benefits are partially funded by the federal government, eligibility for extended benefits is slightly different than for regular benefits. To qualify for regular benefits, an individual must earn a minimum of \$1,600 from qualifying employers during the base period,¹ and also earn at least \$440 in a quarter that is not the highest earning quarter. To qualify for extended benefits,

an individual must, in total during the base period, either: (1) have earned one and one-half times the high quarter wages; (2) have earned 40 times the most recent weekly benefit amount; or (3) have engaged in 20 weeks of “full-time” employment, as defined by state law. In addition, individuals who receive extended benefits normally must expand their job search. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that PUA recipients will qualify for Illinois extended benefits, because eligibility for PUA is dependent on the CARES Act, which is set to expire before PUA recipients exhaust all 39 weeks of eligibility.

As of now, there are many unknowns about extended benefits as it relates to individuals who are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. IDES has loosened job search requirements for such individuals, making a policy that so long as their employer will rehire them when the pandemic restrictions are lifted, those employees meet the requirement to be “actively seeking” work. The first unknown about extended benefits is whether or not IDES will abandon that policy and require those individuals to provide a record of their job search or register for Illinois Job Link, as they have not been required to do up until this point. Next, it is unclear whether individuals will have to apply for extended benefits, or whether they will be automatically transitioned into this program, if they qualify, once PEUC expires. It is also unknown whether Illinois intends to allow extended benefits to be added on in full after the PEUC program finishes, or whether the programs will run concurrently, reducing the total number of extended benefit weeks that are available to an individual after their PEUC ends. On the other hand, it is possible that Congress could also extend the CARES Act and the PEUC program, which hopefully would eliminate the need to apply for extended benefits for those who are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In summary, it is important to realize that if you are receiving regular unemployment benefits, you may have the option to continue those benefits into 2021 through Illinois’ extended benefit program, even if the CARES Act is not extended. The attorneys and staff at Illinois Advocates are keeping a close eye on IDES’ policies and procedures regarding extended benefits, and will be ready to answer any questions you may have when your current benefits expire. We can be reached at (312)818-6700, and invite you to contact us with any concerns about your unemployment benefits.

¹ The base period consists of the first four of the previous five completed quarters and is used to determine the amount of benefits an individual is entitled to based on the amount they earned from qualifying employers.

CFM is proud to announce the recipients of a Music Family Scholarship from the Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF). The MPTF established this scholarship to encourage the children of professional musicians to pursue higher education and become leaders in their chosen fields. Applicants were encouraged to write an essay describing the impact growing up in a music family has had on their own lives. The recipients are Cameron Chiu, Sylvie Dowd, Victor Garcia, Isadora Harper, Sophie-Ann Lekas, James Lekas, Patti Meadors, James Preucil, Alyson Rea, Kayla Rea, Emrose Seidenberg, Theodore Seidenberg and Michael Semanic.

The CFM is thrilled these families are being recognized in this way. With most of our live music events on hold due to COVID-19, this recognition serves as a reminder to us all of the enduring value of music in our lives and society.

Congratulations, students!



Cameron Chiu: photo courtesy of Cornelius Chiu



Isadora Harper: photo courtesy of Jacque Harper



Sylvie Dowd: photo courtesy of Amy Barwan



Sophie-Ann Lekas: photo courtesy of Sophie-Ann Lekas



James Lekas: photo courtesy of James Lekas



Patti Meadors: photo courtesy of Julie Griffin



James Preucil: photo courtesy of Walter Preucil



Kayla Rea and Alyson Rea: photo courtesy of Evan Rea



Michael Semanic: photo courtesy of Kris and Paul Semanic



2021 Health Insurance Open Enrollment Period

The open enrollment season is here. This year has been challenging for everyone, but understanding your healthcare options doesn't need to be complicated. Comparing the options listed below should allow all CFM members to find healthcare coverage for 2021. Don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

CFM Healthcare

Members currently enrolled in healthcare through the CFM can switch insurance coverage within the plan through December 15. Any changes elected will be effective on January 1, 2021.

CFM members in good standing can enroll in healthcare through your union if you are vested in the AFM pension fund (AFM-EPF) or made \$3,000 in the previous or current calendar year and are under 65. Details can be found on our website at <https://cfm10208.com/musician-resources/health-insurance-options>.

Members are not restricted to an open enrollment period to sign up for healthcare through the CFM and can enroll any time of the year as long as you meet the eligibility requirements.

Healthcare.gov

Enrollment in the Affordable Care Act Marketplace plans is open through December 15. Even if you plan to use an insurance broker to find healthcare coverage, this is an excellent place to compare your options. Of the 11.4 million people enrolled in marketplace plans for 2020, 9.6 million received premium subsidies. With the challenges facing musicians this year, many more CFM members will qualify for those subsidies. Be aware that if your income qualifies you for Medicaid, then you will be ineligible for subsidies through the marketplace. <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

ABE – Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility (Medicaid and other benefits)

Some members have found that during these challenging times, they are eligible for enrollment in Medicaid. In 2014, as part of the Affordable Care Act, Illinois expanded its Medicaid program to include adults

with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>

Children's Healthcare – Illinois All Kids and FamilyCare

The All Kids program has four pricing tiers based on income and covers children who are 18 years old or younger. It can be a good option for many families from a wide range of income levels. For example, there are coverage options for a family of four making up to \$78,228 per year. All Kids even covers dental and vision benefits. You can apply through the ABE system listed above. Details of the All Kids program can be found at <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/Pages/about.aspx>

An affiliated program called FamilyCare covers parents or caregivers living with a child 18 years or younger. <https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/Pages/FamilyCare.aspx>

Healthcare Services for Uninsured Members

With all of the options available to us in Illinois, I hope you will find coverage that works for you. If you discover that you need healthcare and are without insurance, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) may be able to help. They offer a range of services to the uninsured, and there are hundreds of these facilities in our area. An article in the August *Intermezzo* offers more details: https://cfm10208.com/assets/files/Intermezzo_AugSept20_f-LR-P.pdf

Medicare

Medicare open enrollment changes need to be completed by December 7. AARP is a useful resource for information as well as supplemental insurance: <https://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/>

For many years, the CFM has used Northern Insurance Group in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood for our union's various insurance needs. They have also helped many members needing Medicare supplemental insurance. Contact me at nmoran@cfm10208.org and I can put you in touch with them.

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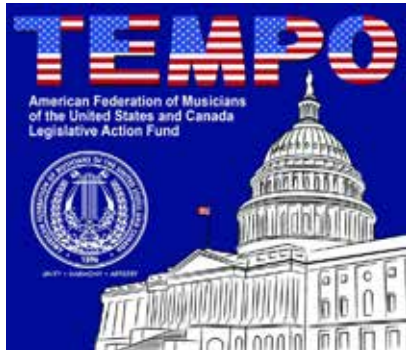
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