



BY DAVE POMEROY

The truth is — the only way we will survive and prosper is to be united and stand together for what we know is right: treating musicians — and each other — with respect.

Ever heard anyone ask “What has the AFM done for me lately?” Here’s a few things you can tell them:

Higher wages and more in 2018

- Over the past year, Local 257 paid out over \$11 million in scale wages to musicians, not including Health and Welfare payments, overscale wages, and New Use checks, and we sent over \$1 million to the AFM-EPF Fund in pension contributions.
- With the help of our excellent NSO negotiating committee, we successfully negotiated a new contract with Nashville Symphony management with significant workplace improvements and 15.75 percent in raises over the next four years.
- The *Grand Ole Opry* now pays extra for Sirius XM broadcasts and Opry TV reruns on RFD are paying a much higher rate because they were done under an AFM contract.
- The Single Song Overdub scale we developed a few years ago has really begun to take off. It makes protecting the recordings you do at home easier and more effective than ever — and allows you to negotiate your own rate with the option to make your own pension contribution if you choose.
- Won over \$750,000 in court settlements for our musicians.

Membership benefits you in many ways

Our Emergency Relief Fund has paid out more than \$200,000 over the past decade to members who are under financial duress due to medical issues. Our Funeral Benefit Fund paid beneficiaries a total of \$132,000 in 2017. Hundreds of our members and

their families are covered under our exclusive Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance plan, with a nationwide network as well, which none of the current ACA plans offered in Tennessee have. In Washington, D.C. we advocate for musician’s issues, and the carry-on laws allowing instruments on planes was the result of a more than 10-year process. We continue to fight for performance rights on AM/FM radio and in the new world of streaming as well.

We’re making getting to your downtown gig easier

We interface with the city on many levels, including Metro Police, Public Works, the Taxi Commissioner, and the mayor’s office about issues ranging from taxi drivers blocking the Musicians Loading Zone that we helped create in 2011, to parking. Our Lyft discount program for musicians working downtown has saved our members nearly \$10,000, and we just reached agreement that the program is going to continue indefinitely. We are allowing members to use our parking lot as a Lyft rendezvous point, and it only costs about \$8 for a round trip with no parking costs. The deal we made with Premier Parking has resulted in our members picking up more than 2000 free coupons at our office for Premier Parking’s McKendree Garage. No matter what the going rate is due to sports events, concerts, or conventions — which can be as high as \$40 or more — when you use our coupon it’s always \$5.

We have your back when you’re touring

For those of you who are out traveling on the road, we can help make sure that satellite radio broadcasts and streaming events pay over and above what you make to get

on the bus and go play a show. Even when you are working in another local’s jurisdiction, remember that we are here to help and will look out for you if something doesn’t go right. Recently, I spent four months getting three musicians severance pay from an artist who fired them 48 hours before a five-week tour was to begin. We stand up for what’s right and we stand up for you.

Our local strives to be a great part of the community

Our building is a community space and we take that aspect seriously as well. We have two jams every month to promote interaction between songwriters and fellow musicians, both members and potential members, and we also host a weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meeting every Thursday at 6 p.m. We have hosted Red Cross blood drives, home-buying seminars and will be hosting a low-cost mobile dental clinic in the near future.

Nashville, and AFM Local 257, have been very good to me, and I am determined to do everything I can to make sure that successive generations of musicians will have the same types of opportunities that so many of us have had. I will not stand for people mistreating our members, or any musician for that matter. The truth is — the only way we will survive and prosper is to be united and stand together for what we know is right: treating musicians — and each other — with respect. That’s how we got here and why we have survived 115 years as a labor union. So, the next time someone asks you “What does the musicians union do anyway?” maybe this will give you a few things to pass on. Our door is always open to those who want to be part of making things better for ALL musicians. That’s why we’re here, and why we’re not going anywhere anytime soon. **TNM**