

III. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS - WORKING CONDITIONS

8. Working time

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Current Provisions for scheduling in Australian Orchestras

- All Professional orchestras in Australia currently offer full time work. That is 52 weeks salary including
 - 5 / 6 weeks annual rec. leave.
 - Paid Parental leave
 - Long Service Leave
- Typical 'call' structure applies. [= service, duty or session]
- Musician's full-time commitment is defined in terms of an annual call count. Varies between orchestras 300–340 per year.
- Calls are generally of 2 ½ hours duration. We have 'playing' calls and 'non-playing' calls. Non-playing calls may include travel, meeting attendances and audition panels.
- The rate of work is regulated to manage health and injury issues. We aim for an average of 8 playing calls per week, with restrictions:
 - a maximum of 10 calls in a week,
 - a maximum of 32 playing calls per 4 week 'cycle'.
- A cycle may contain up to 40 calls, made up of the 32 playing calls and up to 8 non-playing calls.
- This model provides sufficient "flexibility" for managers while keeping occupational health a priority.
- Minimum call length is a standard concept. It would be untenable to pay the percussionist for only 15 minutes if he plays in only one movement of the symphony!
- Funding authorities and accountants see obvious inefficiency of course and point out low 'productivity'.

Scheduling Issues faced by Orchestras

- Orchestras are facing considerable challenges to maintain audience by traditional concert programming and subscription based marketing.
- We are seeing an increase in activities such as 'cross-genre' productions (eg rock bands with orchestra!); corporate functions for sponsor companies; Television appearances; and appearances at sporting functions.
- Education and "community outreach" is becoming a core activity.
- These activities generally do not fall into convenient 2.5 hour calls.
 - The Commonwealth Games opening ceremony. Orchestra (MSO) played for a few minutes in the event... but had to be in the arena for several hours for 'security' reasons.
 - Similarly corporate dinners where the actual performance time may only be a few minutes.
 - Live television often requires seating rehearsal and hours of sitting waiting for the appearance which may take a few minutes.
 - Promoters for arena events such as rock concerts find traditional call structures 'inflexible'.
 - Outreach activities such as school visits by an ensemble from the orchestra may include travel, and additional responsibilities such as presentation, or facilitation.
- Accommodating these activities into standardised calls is often very difficult. In many cases

special arrangements have to be agreed with musicians. While using calls can be the simplest administratively, the costs can be prohibitive.

- Orchestra's traditional symphony / opera work involves forward planning and contracting several years in advance for artists and venues. Hence much of the year's schedule is fixed well in advance. Education and outreach along with these other activities are then squeezed into the remaining gaps, and receive lower priority in the scheduling process.

- Managers are resorting to strategies such as:

- sub-contracting their own musicians "off-roster" to circumvent the constraints of the standard call structure... **which compromises health priorities and potentially weakens working conditions.**

- The use of freelance or 'casual' musicians... expensive and comprises performance quality.

- Taking the risk of leaving gaps in the advance schedule into which commercially profitable projects can be inserted later... **highly unproductive if no project is secured.**

- Turning down projects because they cannot be accommodated ...**embarrassing to explain to government and corporate funding agencies.**

