

II. HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

6. Support to orchestra musicians

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I would first like to address the attention to the fact that we in Norway have a long tradition that important issues and difficult questions for instance connected to working life, such as wage settlement, pensions reforms and other social and welfare issues, often are solved and discussed in what we call the co-operation of the three partners; the government, the trade unions and the representatives of the employers. From 2011 Norway has implemented a new pension reform, where the trade unions were deeply involved in the talks with the government in the preparation of this new reform. The main objective is making people stand longer in jobs and the government wants that the actual pension age is raised. In short term, it is now become a flexible pension age, from 62 to 70, where the bonus is, the longer you stand in your job, the higher the pension will be. Some orchestras have though a specific pension age of 65 years which is regulated in a local collective agreement where the musician is entitled a pension of 66% of the wage at the time of the retirement, the whole life out.

Norway has a national health service which provides us with free medical treatment. We are entitled to full sick pay under illness, up to one year. Sickness will not have any negative economic effect until one year has passed. After a year you have to go on special social arrangements where the social service system tries to bring you back to working life. The employers also have to have an industrial injury insurance, which covers injuries that occur in connection with work.

Most of the orchestras have signed the "inclusive work place". It gives the institutions, the musicians and the social service system a tool of lowering the sickness absence, increasing the possibility to stand longer in jobs after the age of 50 and increasing people into working life with reduced working capacity.

When it comes to the musicians, the different orchestras in Norway have local arrangements connected to health and welfare. Many questions are regulated in The Working Environment Act. Orchestras are obliged, or at least they have to provide, with what we call a company health service where different types of medical services are provided.

Some orchestras have a residential physiotherapist or they can provide physiotherapy on demand. Even massage or osteopathy is given. One orchestra even has a physiotherapist with them on tours. Musicians are given access to fitness rooms in connection to where the orchestras rehearse or discount is given to fitness centres nearby. Most orchestras provide different types of medical checks and ear test are given on regular basis. Hearwigs chairs are also a common sight within the orchestras.

Earplugs are individually shaped and provided. Two orchestras have even included a program or a co-operation with the Norwegian Olympic Top Centre, where matters such as psychological stress and motivation are in focus. There are also being invested in a survey that will look into the connection between a musician's musical preparation, maximum effort and rest within a concert season. When it comes to taking care of older musicians within the institutions, some orchestras have what we call a free-week arrangement, which means that when the musician reach a specific age, an extra free week of work is given, up to 6 weeks at the age of 64 in one orchestra. Holidays in general are regulated both in the national holiday act and in collective agreements. The musicians are entitled a holiday of 5 weeks per year and 6 weeks after the age of 60. After the summer break two extra weeks are given for preparation to the coming season. Finally as you can hear, we have in Norway many good welfare arrangements. The national economy is good compared to many other countries. Our welfare system is probably based on a common consensus among people that the "Scandinavian model" is worth keeping. A model

where the state is active and provides the inhabitants with basic rights such as free medical treatment, free education and good welfare services in general and specific connected to old age. We have a system where you are allowed to be home with a new born child up to 56 weeks with 80% of your salary. This is paid by the state.

The Culture life and the big culture institutions are heavily subsidized by the state. This gives the artist predictability. Concerns about losing jobs or cutting in budgets have up till now not been a problem compared to other orchestras in other countries. But when I say this, I have to underline, that the pressure upon the musicians are getting higher and tougher. The musical standard is higher than ever. Rights connected to transmissions are now included in the ordinary salary, concerts on different times and days during the week are increasing, the musicians in the orchestras have to be prepared to play in smaller chamber ensembles on demand and the expectation by the owners that the musician should be more available to the general public is growing. The pressure on flexible working schedules and on "normal" family life is more intense now than it used to be in earlier days.

