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The Musicians' Voice

The Musicians' Voice is an open forum for discussion about the state of union affairs. The letters here do not necessarily express the views of Local 802. E-mail letters to Allegro@Local802afm.org or write to Allegro, Local 802, 322 West 48th Street, New York, NY 10036. Letters must be no more than 300 words.

Airline horror story has happy ending

This is a further chapter in the story of Delta Airlines' relations with musicians. I recently flew from Kansas City to New York City after teaching at the Mark Wood Rock Orchestra Camp. At the check-in counter, an agent began to question me about flying with my viola and electric viola. She "encouraged" me to check one or both. I assured her that when cabled together, both instruments comfortably fit the overhead compartment of a small plane, and that I had never had any trouble before.

While I was being hassled about my instruments, another agent was busy mistagging my bag. My agent turned pale when she realized my bag had been sent down the loading conveyor with another passenger's claim check. She explained the issue, briefly disappeared, and returned, telling me the problem was solved.

Guess what? It wasn't. My luggage made two round trips to Ghana and spent the next week in limbo; nobody seemed able to locate the bag or return it to me. After days of frustration (which included being told that the Kansas City agent was only trying to "protect" my instruments), I decided to take action: I e-mailed the AFM and copied four high-level Delta executives.

Within hours, Delta apologized and took steps to provide adequate service and compensation. I received my luggage undamaged a few days later, was granted \$875 in travel vouchers, and was reimbursed for all out-of-pocket incidental expenses incurred during the delay. While I would rather not have experienced this ordeal, I was satisfied with the end result of Delta's efforts to make things right.

Thank you for standing up for the rights of flying musicians. The union's constant vigilance and advocacy makes a huge difference and helps members resolve problems when they arise.

Dr. David Wallace

Hello from Vic Carlton

I've been a member of Local 802 since 1941 and will turn 92 on Oct. 22. I've played sax and