

Officer is musicians' listening ear

By B. J. Huchtemann

Whenever a professional band comes to town, Keith Heckman has a contract out on them.

Heckman is secretary-treasurer of the Lincoln Musicians Association, the local union branch of the American Federation of Musicians.

"For every professional engagement within fifty miles of Lincoln I have to have a copy of the contracts," Heckman said. All contracts must be on file with the Lincoln Musicians Association prior to performances.

Contracts range from concerts by "name" groups to wedding dances by local bands. Heckman provides the musicians association's listening ear if there are any disputes between performers and employers.

Contractual disputes are unfortunate, but they do happen, Heckman said. For example, an employer may tell a band he didn't like the way it played a song and try to pay it less money than agreed on. If a dispute goes to court the association provides its members with an attorney.

A contract between a name group and Pershing Auditorium or the state fair may be twenty pages long. It may include items like specifications on food and refreshments to be furnished by the employer, technical equipment, rehearsals, and the promotional campaign.

The musicians association has responsibilities to its members other than providing contracts and arbitrating in disputes.

"There are a number of things we do," Heckman said. "Collectively we set what the minimum wage scale is for the area, so each musician gets a decent wage."

Members are covered by union life, health and in-

strument insurance. The instrument insurance is important because the insurance carried by those hiring musicians rarely covers musicians' instruments in the event of fire or other damage.

The association also serves as a referral service for employment among members, nationally as well as locally. Heckman stressed, however, that the association is not an employment agency.

During the year, the association sponsors seminars for musicians to help them improve their musical ability. Members are also kept aware of laws and changes in laws which may affect them.

Ruben Haun is president of the Lincoln Musicians Association which has 450 members. Nationally the American Federation of Musicians has 330,000 members.

"Basically we are a union for instrumentalists," Heckman explained. He added that the union is for professional musicians who


plan to go out and play for a profit.

Only about ten per cent of the local members actually make a living as professional musicians, Heckman said. The rest are teachers, doctors and other business people who have a serious commitment to performing.

A large number of musicians find work in Omaha in the symphonies, at Ak-Sar-Ben, at the Orpheum Theater and in

other clubs and lounges as back-up musicians.

Heckman said he feels there are advantages to being a union member. If one holds a union membership, he or she is placed on the list for any local or national referrals that come in. Members can work in states such as Minnesota and Illinois, which are closed union shops and can hire only union members. Union membership is about \$36 a year.



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10:30 PM Hawaii Five-O/Kojak

THURSDAY

6:30 PM Thursday Magazine Today's Woman
7:00 PM The Waltons
9:00 PM Barnaby Jones
10:00 PM 10/11 News
10:30 PM M*A*S*H

FRIDAY

6:30 PM The Jeffersons
7:00 PM Wonder Woman
8:00 PM The Incredible Hulk
10:00 PM 10/11 News
10:30 PM The Bob Devaney Show
11:00 PM The New Avengers

SATURDAY

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7:30 PM Good Times
8:00 PM The American Girls
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10:30 PM Rhoda

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6:00 PM 60 Minutes
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