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Musician Sues Managers and Church of Scientology

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Jazz musician Gabor Szabo sued the Church of Scientology and Vanguard Artists International for more than \$21 million Tuesday, claiming they misappropriated his money and mismanaged his career.

According to the Los Angeles County Superior Court civil suit, Szabo signed a contract with Vanguard Nov. 17, 1978, to serve as his manager for a percentage of his income. The suit stated that Vanguard is a subsidiary of the Church of Scientology, but Scientology spokesmen denied any official connection.

Szabo claimed the managers failed to give him accountings of his earnings, failed to give him some of his earnings, improperly calculated their fees, and misappropriated \$15,000 for his purported Scientology "training." He said in the suit they also coerced him into turning over \$20,000 to them and failed to prepare his income tax returns, exposing him to criminal liability.

The managers, he said, "sought not to promote (Szabo's) career but rather to utilize (Szabo) to promote the activities of the Church of Scientology."

He said most of his bookings were for non-paying "benefits" for Narconon, the Scientologists' drug rehabilitation group.

The suit seeks at least \$1 million in general damages for unearned or mis-

used salary and \$20 million in punitive damages.

Church of Scientology spokesman Rev. Heber Jentsch's office said they were unaware of the lawsuit and that the church had nothing to do with Szabo's management contract.

The spokesman said Szabo last Dec. 28 received a full refund of the \$15,000 he had paid for training in the doctrines of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. In return, the spokesman said, Szabo signed a statement that he was firing his attorney, Howard Thaler, and would forever release the Scientologists from any liability regarding the money.

The suit filed Tuesday was prepared by attorney Roger J. Lewis.

The Scientology spokesman said the organization would consider filing its own suit against Szabo if he had reneged on the Dec. 28 release form.

The spokesman said Szabo's suit was "money-motivated and nothing more than simple extortion."

The Scientologist said Vanguard has no official connection with the Church of Scientology, although its director, musician Chick Corea, and other officials are Scientologists. As for his work at Narconon benefits, the spokesman said Narconon had helped Szabo more than he had helped it.

Susan Garson, Corea's manager, said she was "shocked and disappointed" to hear the suit had been filed.