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THE PUERTO RICO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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The recent death of Pablo Casals has given rise to a great deal of conjecture concerning the future of three musical entities which were launched in Puerto Rico under the Casals name during the past seventeen years. These entities are the annual Puerto Rico Casals Festival, the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music, and the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. Although their functions are quite different (in some ways, opposed), for historical reasons the three agencies are all under a common management; they share the same publicity and fund-raising mechanisms, an overlapping administrative staff, and, to some extent, the same legislative appropriations.

The annual Puerto Rico Casals Festival, the central element in the combination, was established in 1957, on a format similar to that of the Prades Festivals with which Casals had been intimately associated in southern France. The purpose of the Puerto Rico festivals was to stimulate tourism of a particularly desirable type, while creating for the island an image of tranquility and high purpose which would aid the government's efforts to attract foreign capital for the island's industrial development program. In order that these goals might be reached most efficiently, a Casals Festival Corporation was created as a subsidiary of the government's Puerto Rico Industrial Development Corporation (PRIDCO). Subsequently, the Casals Festival Corporation, still (as now) a subsidiary of PRIDCO, became entrusted with the creation of the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music and, in response to pressure from citizens deeply concerned about the lack of a permanent orchestra *between* annual festivals, the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. Casals' own function gradually became one of inspiration, not administration. This was only fitting; the great cellist was fast approaching his 90's, and could hardly be expected to spend his days at the office churning out memos and directives. Planning, staffing, and decision-making for the three branches became the province of a handful of executives drawn from the middle levels of PRIDCO and responsible to that agency.

This unity of management, under businessmen experienced in industrial promotion, has had great advantages at times. However, the intertwining of functions (tourism, industrial development, education, and local cultural development) under common fiscal control and tightly managed by a single office, has also created some serious problems over the years. For example, it has always been extremely difficult for the press or for concerned citizens to obtain reliable figures concerning the internal flow of the common funds which support the Corporation's separate functions. The question of priorities, inherent in the existing managerial situation, has often been raised publicly but has never been answered. Many observers believe that the Corporation's responsibility for local cultural development, including the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, has consistently been shunted aside in favor of a brief annual festival whose effect on the Puerto Rican economy (the reason for its existence) has never undergone serious evaluation.

The above preamble may help colleagues understand why at contract time the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra regularly as-

sumes the posture of a poor relation awaiting a handout. It may also clarify why it has taken the orchestra fifteen years to attain a season of 28 weeks and salaries (\$150.50 to \$215.00) which, at least, permit instrumental teachers, freelancers, students, and other part-timers to augment their incomes derived from other sources. Contractual conditions are still medieval: tenure, retirement, health insurance, and other benefits are conspicuous by their absence, while only the wildest dreamers allow themselves to think of a contract which might commit the parties to more than one season at a time.

The general status of the orchestra is a familiar one in many parts of the United States: neither community-amateur nor full-time professional, the orchestra cannot recruit enough capable players (either from within Puerto Rico or abroad) due to the unfavorable conditions which I have outlined above. What may be unfamiliar up north, due to the peculiar genesis and history of this particular orchestra, is the melancholy cycle of which it forms one part. The orchestra doesn't sound as good as the management, avid record-collectors all, thinks it should; consequently, the Corporation feels fully justified in devoting most of its attention to an especially contracted festival orchestra, also under its sponsorship, which *does* sound good, and which possesses the even greater virtue of conveniently disappearing after its annual two- or three-week appearance on the local scene. As a result, the Symphony Orchestra fails to improve, and so we arrive at contract time again. While participating in Kafkaesque contract negotiations a couple of years ago as part of an orchestra-union team, I received the distinct impression that far from wishing to contribute to Puerto Rico's cultural climate by working to improve the symphony orchestra for whose development they were responsible, Corporation executives would have been pleased to see the orchestra, the committee, the union, and Puerto Rico's day-to-day musical life at the bottom of the Caribbean.

Although this orchestra's history has been generally bleak, there have been positive signs from time to time, as orchestra members, the union, the legislature, and a considerable segment of the public have begun to sort things out for themselves. The result, while slow to develop, has been cumulative. Two years ago, the Symphony Orchestra's season took a spectacular leap from 17 to 28 weeks due to the direct action of the Hon. Luis A. Ferre, then Governor of Puerto Rico and an accomplished amateur pianist. Previously, Ferre had appeared as soloist with the Symphony Orchestra during an educational concert sponsored by Local 468 AFM (San Juan); the extension was the result of a legislative bill drafted in consultation with Abraham Pena, Local 468's astute president, and bearing the Governor's special endorsement.

A more recent sign of hope was the first appointment of a Puerto Rican musician to a high post in the management. Six months before Casals' death, pianist Elias Lopez Soba was named Executive Director of the Casals Festival Corporation. Lopez Soba, until his appointment a teacher in the Music Department of the University of Puerto Rico, is an accomplished concert artist

with considerable experience in arts management, as well. His job will be difficult, for it means reorienting an existing governmental structure, from the inside outward. Traditions, responsibilities, and priorities within the Corporation had become firmly established during the past 17 years, and it will take time for any fundamental changes to be felt.

For the short range, Lopez Soba has definite plans, which, if he is allowed to carry them out, will result in a much more stable, more responsible, and better orchestra within the next five years. He has already dusted off the draft of a set of by-laws which had been prepared and approved by orchestra members a few years ago, with an eye toward getting it accepted as the orchestra's basic governing document. He has conceived a reasoned plan of orchestral expansion, both in season and numbers, which within a few years can bring the orchestra to a 40-week season and, for the first time, something approaching balanced instrumentation. In the near future, the new executive director plans to create a separate publicity and public relations mechanism for the Symphony Orchestra. This simple innovation alone will have an immediate and healthy effect, for it will enable the members of the orchestra, for the first time in history, to feel like elements in a known and functioning cultural enterprise, not anonymous beggars at Big Daddy's back door. This will mark a big and potentially important step in the orchestra's growing sense of professional and cultural commitment; a step which should lead to members' claiming — and getting — a greater voice in all matters which concern them directly.

MINNESOTA REPORTS LAST FALL NEGOTIATIONS

On October 1st, after 10 days of play and talk, and 10 hours before a Strike-Lockout deadline, the Minnesota Orchestra members voted 60-25 to accept a 3 year contract which calls for;

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
Wages	\$280	\$295	\$320
Across Board	\$26	\$15	\$25
Season	48 wks.	48 wks.	50 wks.
Vacation	4 wks.	5 wks.	6 wks.

Pension benefits increased approximately \$100 a month to \$350 minimum at normal retirement.

Improved Health Insurance plan which provides 1/2 and full family coverage the last 2 contract years. (Members now covered)

A limited String Relief plan (foot in the door)

An Artistic Advisory Committee

Overshadowing negotiations was the Orchestra's new hall, now under construction and scheduled for completion in time for the opening concerts in October 1974. Management was so busy with the political and financial groundwork that Contract negotiation began in mid-August (not counting a couple of meaningless rhetorical sessions).

Then, in a 2 week series of meetings, the Orchestra Committee thoroughly discussed the working condition areas with the understanding that any agreement was contingent on the economic package. All negotiations having to do with economic issues were headed by Len Liebowitz, and progressed from \$10-\$5-\$10 offers with no fringe improvements to what we were finally able to accept. This was accomplished mainly in two 12 hour plus sessions with Federal and State mediators.

Local #73 President Bob Biglow was especially helpful in setting up the mediation sessions, and we cannot say enough about the support of the Officers and Board of Local #73 in a busy year of contract negotiations and a successfully fought Non-Renewal arbitration case. Phil Sipser and Len Liebowitz supplied their usual first rate legal expertise.

The Minnesota Orchestra Committee

DALLAS CITIZENS PONDER, MAJOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OR NOT?

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra in its 74th year temporarily suspended operations on March 12 due to lack of funds. The announcement came with dramatic suddenness by Jack Vandagriff, President of the Dallas Symphony Association. However, the financial problems of the Dallas Symphony did not occur over night. For years there has been improper funding for the orchestra, also a lack of support from the business community. This fact led to the resignation of Max Rudolf as artistic advisor of the Dallas Symphony in mid January. Until this time the Dallas business leaders have not come to grips with financing a major symphony orchestra.

A meeting was held on April 5 between representatives of the Dallas Symphony Association and the DSO Players' Committee in an effort to reach terms on which the DSO could resume its suspended season. The Symphony Association presented the following points:

1. The Dallas Symphony play park concerts on April 14 and April 21.
2. Two rehearsals would be scheduled during the week of April 15.
3. Resumption of the season would begin on April 23 through May 27.
4. Wages for suspension period (March 12 - April 23) would be paid when the Symphony Association has adequate funds.
5. Salaries would be paid normally for the period of April 23 through May 27.
6. The summer season is cancelled and no salaries will be paid.
7. 74/75 season will not exceed 25 weeks plus 7 weeks with the Dallas Civic Opera.

On April 11 the orchestra members received a directive from DSO management to return to work beginning April 14. The orchestra members voted not to breach their contracts, to return to work as directed even though the pay would be on a deferred basis. Nevertheless, the musicians expect their contractual rights for a 42 week season to be upheld.

It became quite apparent that the funds which the Association raised during the six week suspension period have been and are being dispersed to pay debts of the Association and that the salaries due the musicians for the six week suspension period have a very low priority. The orchestra members felt compelled to seek legal counsel with the sanction of Local #147. Requests for arbitration were made by our attorneys according to the provisions of the master contract. The Dallas Symphony Association did not see fit to respond to these requests.

In view of the above stated failure of the Dallas Symphony Association to follow the grievance procedure of our contract and to continually disregard our attempts at arbitration, our attorneys made plans for a civil suit to compel arbitration of our claim for back wages. Evidently wishing to avoid legal action, the Association then agreed to arbitration.

A fund drive has been approved for \$500,000 during the month of June. This is the first public fund drive approved by the Citizen's Council for the Dallas Symphony since the Spring of 1972. This is a small step forward in the right direction.

The members of the Dallas Symphony still face the problems of negotiating a contract pertaining to salary and number of weeks for the 74/75 season according to the terms of the master contract. To accept management's suggested 25 week season is out of the question. This would reduce the DSO to the status of a part-time community orchestra.

The Dallas Symphony Players' Committee: Merle Clayton, Joan Davis, John Kitzman, Jim London and Betty Patterson.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AUDITION POLICIES

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is holding auditions this Spring to fill string section vacancies. We expect this to be a frequent occurrence during the next few years. The CSO is eager to obtain the finest orchestral musicians to fill vacant positions in order to maintain the orchestra's standards of performance. An important factor in acquiring such musicians is an orchestra's audition policies.

The CSO Audition Committee recently adopted by-laws which amplify contractual provisions and document procedures and policies we have followed during the last several years. We have sought to avoid those practices one so frequently hears about: auditions where someone actually has the job "sewed up" in advance of "token" auditions; where candidates are accepted or rejected on the basis of sex, age, or race; where applicants wait for weeks or months before receiving audition information, or wait equally long after an audition to find out if they have a job or not; where players spend substantial sums to travel to distant cities only to play perfunctory auditions of a few minutes length.

We want prospective auditioners to know that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is an orchestra that treats them with courtesy, efficiency, and complete fairness.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra auditions are completely open; anyone who wishes to do so may perform a preliminary audition, although only competent musicians with orchestral experience are encouraged to apply. Receipt of application is immediately acknowledged. Repertoire is announced in advance. No discrimination is made on the basis of any written credentials which may be submitted by the candidate.

Preliminary auditions are held behind screens to preserve the anonymity of each applicant and prevent any discrimination. Each candidate is assured the opportunity to play a portion of a prepared solo and a basic group of representative excerpts from the standard repertoire; some candidates may then be asked to play additional excerpts. Each member of the orchestra's nine-man Audition Committee casts his vote to pass a candidate on to the final audition solely on the performer's musical merit. No consultation among committee members is permitted. A performer must receive at least one more than a simple majority of favorable votes in order to reach the finals. Waiting candidates are immediately notified of their acceptance or rejection after each voting session.

Final auditions are held without screens with the Music Director in attendance. He alone makes the final decision after consultation with the Audition Committee. The best performer is selected regardless of his or her immediate availability. While this last policy must be applied with some reasonable limitation, it does mean that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is willing to wait a year if necessary for an excellent player who may already be under contract for the following season, rather than settle for the second best performer.

Questionable audition practices by any orchestra hurt us all. We are making positive efforts here in Chicago to hold fair and open auditions.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Audition Committee

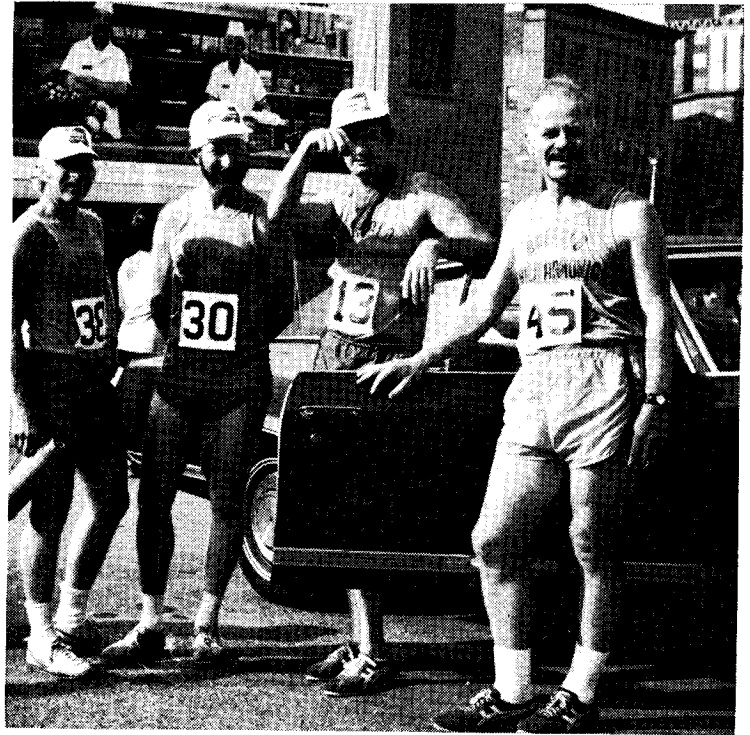
TOO MANY ENGLISH HORNS?

Sir,—There has been a lot of talk lately that the Montreal Symphony Orchestra is not representative of the cultural needs of the French community of Montreal. Would it be more representative were all the English horns to be replaced by French horns?

Abe Crelinsten,
Montreal.

BUFFALO "STREAKERS" ISSUE A CHALLENGE

There was one out and a man on first base when the batter swung and hit one safely to right field. The runner on first rounded second The Orchestra Manager covered his eyes and proceeded to mumble incoherently as, in a cloud of dust, the Concertmaster slid head first into third base. Safe! shouted the umpire as the Musical Director swallowed his first Librium tablet of the afternoon. All over the country, this summer, tension ridden Orchestra



Left to right: Don Brombacker, Jesse Kregal, Alan Gross, John Burgess.

Managers with weakening hearts will be sweating out this seasonal return to youthful pleasure on the baseball field by their string players, oboists and other assorted contracted talents, seeking a new and different type of acclaim.

In Buffalo, however, a select group of that orchestra's finest physical specimens, in an admirable display of consideration for the health of its Board of Trustees, have been simply indulging themselves in the strenuous but less dangerous pastime of "picking them up and laying them down." Last fall, while the Buffalo Orchestra was struggling towards a contract, the B.P.A.C. (Buffalo Philharmonic Athletic Club) Track Team barreled down Interstate 90 towards the starting line of the Annual Canton Ohio Marathon. All seven entries finished the race.

Formed several years ago by John "Fingers" Burgess, solo flute, Alan "I only go fast on Yom Kippur" Gross, team dentist, and Jesse "Machine" Kregal, tympanist, the team had practiced hard, codified, plagiarized, fugged, fumed, panted and otherwise perfected the gentle art of running (as opposed to that of music).

"We are proud. Our families are proud (mine son, the runner) and we want to let all our musical constituents know of our "feets". We are throwing down the gauntlet."

"Gauntlet...n. a thin
sonnet to be worn on
either hand and thrown down. (Webster)

The Buffalo Philharmonic Athletic Club track team challenges other symphony orchestra track teams to a long distance foot race, any distance from three miles to a full 26.2 mile Marathon. Point

system and details will be basically official A.A.U.

"We look forward to challengers. If, by the end of this 1973-74 season, we remain undefeated or unchallenged, we will declare ourselves the North American Champion Symphony Orchestra Track Team and go for the World Championship in the 1974-75 season."

Jesse Kregal, Chorus for the Buffalo Philharmonic A.C. Track Team.

DETROIT PENSION BENEFITS INCREASED

Problems relating to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra pension plan were finally resolved in April, 1973, eleven months after ratification of the present master contract. The pension plan calls for non-contributory status, that is, no contribution on the part of the musician. All past contributions will be returned. The minimum benefit was increased to \$300 per month or the percentage of wage credit, whichever is greater. Early retirement, deferred-vested benefits and disability retirement are also pro-rated on the \$300. minimum benefit, if it is the greater benefit.

As a result of the knowledge gained through the negotiations culminating in the new pension settlement, the orchestra committee feels it would be beneficial to all members to become better acquainted with actuarial computation as it relates to their pension, and plans to work in that direction well in advance of the next negotiation year.

PITTSBURGH PREMIERES McCULLOH WORK

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra performed the world premiere of the Symphony Concertante for Tympanist and Orchestra by Byron McCulloh in December. Byron, as well as being a Carnegie-Mellon University composer, is bass-trombonist in the Pittsburgh Symphony. The work called for Stanley Leonard, tympanist, to use 17 drums, including five pedal tympani, four rototoms and eight tom-toms.

Donald Johnson, who commissioned the McCulloh work for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, conducted the premiere performances during concerts on December 21st and 23rd in Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts. Both McCulloh and Leonard are in their 18th year with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

1973 - 74 SYMPHONY WAGE CHART

	Weeks	Weekly Salary	Annual Wage
ATLANTA	42	\$243.	\$10,206.
BALTIMORE	42	240.	10,080.
BOSTON	52	330.	17,160.**
BUFFALO	42	250.	10,500.
CHICAGO	52	350.	18,200.
CINCINNATI	52	245.	12,740.
CLEVELAND	52	307. avg.	15,900.
DALLAS	31	250.	7,750.*
DENVER	42	230.	9,660.
DETROIT	50	285. avg.	14,350.
HONOLULU	34	190.	6,460.
HOUSTON	52	240.	12,480.
INDIANAPOLIS	40	225.	9,000.
KANSAS CITY	32	205.	6,560.
LOS ANGELES	52	305.	15,860.
MILWAUKEE	46	222.50	10,235.
MINNESOTA	48	280.	13,440.
MONTREAL	46	245.	11,270.
NATIONAL	51	285.	14,535.
NEW HAVEN	7	253.	1,071.
NEW JERSEY			4,830.
NEW ORLEANS	38	226.	8,610.
NEW YORK	52	350.	18,200.**
NO. CAROLINA	31	187.50	5,812.
OREGON	(100 services)		2,850.
PHILADELPHIA	52	340.	17,700.**
PITTSBURGH	51	285.	14,535.
ROCHESTER	38	255.	9,690.
ST. LOUIS	52	240.	12,480.**
SAN ANTONIO	33	190.	6,270.
SAN FRANCISCO	50	305.	15,250.
SEATTLE	38	240.	9,120.
SYRACUSE	34	154.	5,236.
TORONTO	47	245.	11,515.
VANCOUVER	34	177.45	6,033.
WINNIPEG	32	160.	5,120.
MET. OPERA	51	360.	18,360.
CHICAGO OPERA	14	325.	4,550.
N.Y.C. OPERA	34	303. avg.	10,320.
N.Y.C. BALLET	31	300.	9,300.

*Eleven weeks cancelled from 1973-74 season.

**Recording guarantee not included.

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