

Atlantic Symphony struggles for survival

by Helen Marshall

Premier Buchanan says no, Minister of Communications Francis Fox says no, even the oil company presidents are saying no.

It seems nobody is going to save the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra (ASO) from collapsing under its \$407 thousand deficit except for the relentless local musicians who are looking for new avenues to revive the Orchestra.

"The Atlantic Symphony Orchestra is not a dead issue," says Jim Faraday, principal with the orchestra. "And I'm trying really hard to get it back on its wheels."

Faraday is not alone. Other members of the symphony and Dalhousie music students are fighting to keep the issue alive and to keep people aware of their efforts.

One of their initial tactics is letter writing. Petitions are being circulated but it's volume mail that makes governments aware of the gravity of the situation. Dal music students are encouraging everyone to write letters to all levels of government. If no response is received from the community, says Faraday, "they'll say what the hell". It's important to maintain our visibility, he adds.

That visibility is going to be maintained through a series of concerts. Burt Wathen is violist with the ASO, and chairman of Classic Concert Productions. Better known as the Pro Musica Singers and the Pro Musica Quartet, their season will commence later this month with a concert at St. Theresa's Church on North Street in Halifax.

Faraday, also president of Nova Music, is planning a late November performance for Nova Music and the ASO. Nova Music is solely responsible for raising the concert's \$15,000 cost.

Two other co-operative concerts are being planned for later October and mid-November. Ian Cowie, ASO trombone player and chairman of Scotia Chamber Players, will work in conjunction with Nova Music and the ASO. The Halifax School of Music Department, the players committee of the orchestra, and Rufus Stewart of Speak Easy Audio, will also participate.

If the symphony were to die it

would leave innumerable problems and unhappy people in its wake. Dalhousie music students, particularly those in their final year, would be among the first to suffer reprisals.

Paula Stewart, president of the Society of Dal Music Students, fears the school might lose some of its teachers. Students study and play with ASO musicians and Stewart says it would be hard to go from "top quality to second best". The symphony is our inspiration, she adds.

Getting in new teachers would be difficult, Stewart explains, because without a symphony there is no work and nothing to attract them. The school's administrative office says that so far they have lost none.

The Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra would not go unscathed, either. They borrow sheet music from the ASO - music that is very expensive to purchase. If they have to start buying all their own music they will have to raise the price of admission and that means attendance will fall, says Stewart. The ASO also lends music to the Dartmouth Community Orchestra.

Scotia Chamber Players, Nova Music, chamber orchestra, the school system, all the spin-offs of the ASO would be affected, says Faraday. "Along with all the other music in town, it's very important for kids to have the opportunity to hear a live orchestra."

Cowie says everybody has "their own little idea" about what should be done to save the floundering orchestra. He thinks the orchestra should be putting in more time here in Halifax to build up a larger audience. Cowie says the problem is "we have no base of support". More concerts for kids and pop series are needed, he says. It is easier to get a pop audience, he explains, and eventually some people start to filter over to the main series.

An emergency fund raising campaign was discussed at an ASO Board of Director's meeting, but the idea was rejected. "It would only have prolonged the agony," Cowie says. "It is more difficult to obtain on-going funding but an orchestra has to have continued

support." He says the board should have started looking for solutions to its problems ten years ago.

Others are harsher in their criticisms of the board. Burt Wathen says the orchestra has been poorly run and the Board of Directors "is a disgrace". Money has been spent unwisely, he says. The management is weak and not fund raising aggressively enough, in his opinion.

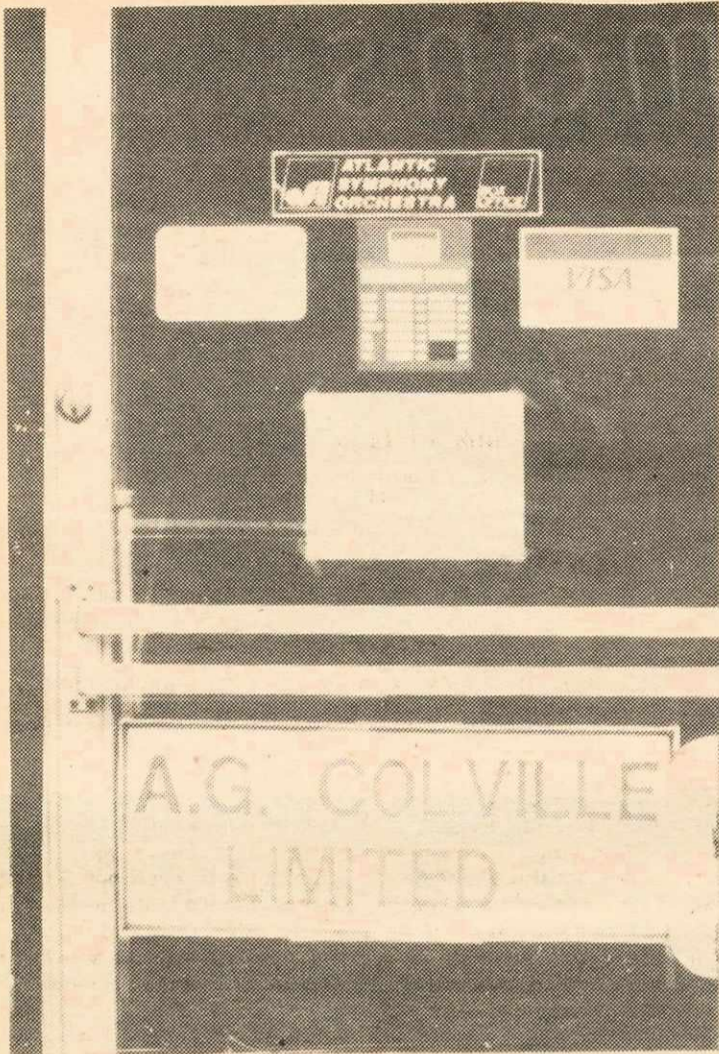
The musicians are optimistic and on one point they all agree. Eventually, there will be some form of symphony orchestra in Halifax. It is most unlikely that a touring ASO will be resurrected, but as Stewart says, even a stationary Halifax orchestra would be a good start.

There also seems to be general agreement that a new symphony will mean a new board of directors being appointed. Board members are scheduled to meet for their annual general meeting by the end of this month. At that meeting the Players Committee will present a position paper. Says Faraday, it is not just criticism, it's a constructive proposal. "We will accept tendered resignations and look to a new board being structured. Any person who has paid the \$10 fee is considered a member-at-large of Atlantic Symphony Incorporated and is eligible to vote on proposals at the meeting."

Eric Perth, director of cultural activities at Dalhousie, says he has received no official notification that the ASO has ceased to function. However, he is selling space the orchestra had reserved in the Rebecca Cohn this fall. He is not selling any of their Christmas bookings, in the event that something comes together.

Commercial promoters are quick to grab the available space, says Perth. Having to cancel the ASO is "not a big financial problem," he says, but it would be a "catastrophe" to lose the orchestra. "We can't replace it. The cost to bring in a symphony orchestra would be incredible."

As Faraday points out, "What are we going to have left to offer all those oil executives who are supposed to be coming to town - the Misty Moon?"



Cold Lake cool to Cruise missile

OTTAWA (CUP) — Canadians will gather in Ottawa October 30 to join other demonstrators across the country in a National Day of Protest against the proposed Cruise missile tests.

The American and Canadian governments plan to test the missile near Cold Lake, Alberta this winter in time for its deployment in Europe in 1984.

Other groups in Winnipeg, Edmonton and possibly Vancouver will join the protest. The demonstrators will also oppose the construction of missile components in Canada. Litton Systems is currently constructing the missile's guidance system in Rexdale, Ontario.

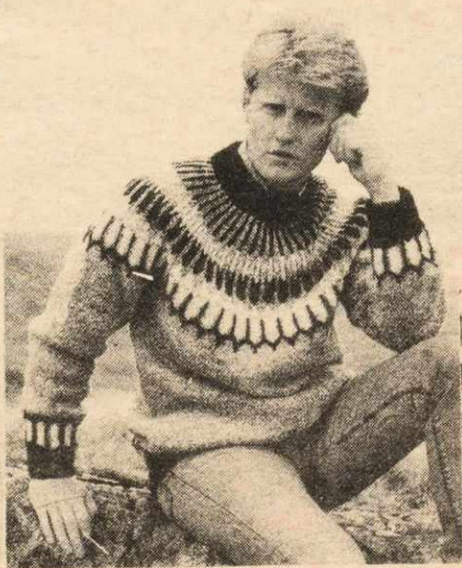
A women's peace caravan is scheduled to leave Vancouver soon to set up a peace camp for the win-

ter in Cold Lake, according to Deborah Powell, an organizer for the October 30 Coalition, the group co-ordinating the Ottawa demonstration.

Powell said the peace camp will educate area residents about the dangers of the Cruise and will be a symbol of resistance.

Jamie Scott, an October 30 Coalition staff person, said the proposed testing contradicts prime minister Trudeau's plan to suffocate the arms race outlined in his address to the first United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1978.

In his address, Trudeau advocated cutting off funding to armaments-related research and banning testing of new nuclear weapon delivery systems.



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