

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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The Story of
Yoerg's Final Decades,
1933-1952

Page 16

Summer, 1996

Volume 31, Number 2

St. Paul's Renowned Ensemble

The Chamber Orchestra's First Ten Years

Page 4

SAINT PAUL
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Leopold Sipe, Conductor



BONGO DIVERTIMENTO
GENE GUTCHE OPUS 35

A COMEDY CANTATA
NOTHING BUT NATURE
OGDEN NASH PAUL FETLER
with the Hamline University Choir • Robert Holliday, Director

SYMPHONY IN D MAJOR
JOSEPH HAYDN "THE HUNT"

HIGH FIDELITY

Jacket for The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's first recording on January 24, 1965. By that time the orchestra had taken root in the community. The recording was made to increase its national recognition, its touring, and its size as an ensemble. See article beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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A Message from the Editorial Board

St. Paul and Ramsey County have had a long tradition of support for the arts. Today, for example, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) is world renowned, with a reputation and stature that reflects its musical excellence. However, as Glenn Perachio shows in his history of the SPCO's first ten years (1959-1970), which leads this issue, the orchestra definitely has had its ups and downs in coming to earn this respect and support. Our Summer issue also celebrates the 150th anniversary of the beginning of Swedish mass immigration to North America with John Larson's reminiscences about his grandfather, Joel, a Swedish immigrant who spent his working life in St. Paul. Rounding out this issue is Jim Bell's close-up look at the last years of the nearly forgotten Yoerg Brewery—a St. Paul landmark for much of the first half of this century.

John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

From 'Part-time Pick-up' to Renowned Ensemble

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Its First Ten Years

Glenn Perachio

During the summer of 1992, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra music librarian James Kortz and research volunteer Carol Peterson visited the Performing Arts Archive at the University of Minnesota to begin researching the Chamber Orchestra's early history. There was uncertainty for years as to the Orchestra's actual age, but there were tentative plans in place to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary season in 1993-94.

What Kortz and Peterson discovered was a pleasant surprise. Not only were there board minutes, concert programs, letters, contracts, newspaper articles, reviews, and promotional materials dating back to the late 1950s, but as Kortz recalls, there was a "well formed idea of what the Chamber Orchestra was to be," and it was remarkably similar in its artistic and social mission to the present-day ensemble. As a result of the discovery, plans were revised to celebrate the SPCO's thirty-fifth Anniversary season.

One item found in Kortz's search was a 1967-68 season program declaring that year "our first season." The program reveals the need at the time to make a definitive statement about the Chamber Orchestra's recent transition from what some called a "part-time pick-up group" to an orchestra with full-time musicians, a business manager, and an expanded season. The missing ten years were, in this respect, sacrificed for little more than public relations hype. Yet when reexamined for their formative value, the years provide a critical perspective on the beginnings of the Chamber Orchestra's transition from a fledgling but earnest local group to a world renowned ensemble.

* * *

In the fall of 1950, the St. Paul Junior League sponsored a study which sought new ways to improve the funding and facilities for cultural activities. The study noted widespread concern for the lack of a central arts facility, strong leadership, or a means of educating local citizens

about the importance of art. The report strongly recommended that increased emphasis be given to the essential unity of the arts within the community:

... [W]here devotion and enthusiasm are separate for each art and people follow their bent and individual organizations their own affairs, there is a danger that any or all may fall short of leaders, fail to make the most of opportunities, [and] lose sight of the collective program for the arts in the community... In Saint Paul there is no agency with any such over-all interest, nor is there any center for the arts.

The Junior League report was pivotal in the formation of a committee, comprised of various groups that had participated in the study. The goal was to create a central facility to unite St. Paul's art organizations and rally support for the arts in the community. By March, 1954, a more permanent organization called the St. Paul Council of Arts and Sciences was in place to raise money collectively for its members. They included the International Institute, the Minnesota Museum of Art, the St. Paul Opera, the Junior League, the Schubert Club, the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Women's Institute and, by 1958, a new organization, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

When Ralph Burgard, a former associate manager of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, arrived in St. Paul in the fall of 1957 to lead a united fund-raising campaign for the arts as president of the Council of Arts and Sciences, he already

was active in what was nationally being termed the "art council movement" or "community symphony movement." Created in part from a need to attract the interest and commitment of a burgeoning young middle class with both increased spending power and leisure time to help sustain and lead the arts organizations, the central idea of the movements was that through service to and involvement in the arts, communities could enjoy the pleasures of classical music with modest contributions of local citizens and businesses alongside the support of existing wealthy patronage. As Burgard declared, "The arts are no longer a luxury, but a necessity"

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, St. Paul had been a hub of "high culture" activity, showcasing nationally-known opera, theater, and music artists, a tradition reserved primarily for the wealthy elite who could afford them. Burgard recalled that by the time of his arrival, "Any vision of a great tradition in St. Paul was pretty much down at the ears. The downtown was fading... [and there were] lots of empty buildings." Despite continued efforts by the Council, St. Paul was still without a central arts facility and without a mechanism in place to encourage the active participation of its citizens in cultural activities. About the only center for creative activity at the time was a small courtyard in the middle of downtown called "Alley 29." This area contained a Japanese restaurant, a boutique, a book store, and an art gallery. As Burgard said, "It was our one claim to sophistication."

The stigma of playing second-best to Minneapolis, which was enjoying not only a boom in commerce and industry but a strong arts environment, proved painfully apparent, and Burgard recognized a pervasive lack of civic pride:

—1959 to 1970

Saint Paul had a tremendous inferiority complex in the midst of postwar expansion . . . During the 20s and 30s . . . Saint Paul was generally considered as the cultured city. By the time World War II had come and gone, that original leadership had waned . . . [we were] trying desperately to find anyone who would take up the gauntlet of cultural advocacy.

Burgard set out immediately to rally enthusiasm for the arts. In the summer of 1958, he staged an elaborate festival for the arts in Rice Park complete with trumpet heralding from the roof of Landmark Center and featuring many of the city's arts organizations in action. By fall, he managed to galvanize four St. Paul citizens to lead what was referred to as "a community-wide musical organization." In November, 1958, the St. Paul Philharmonic Society was incorporated. Larry Platt, who was in the lumber business, was elected its president; Hamilton Ross, an attorney, took up the vice-presidency; Jean West was secretary; and Louis Klass, treasurer. Along with seven other directors, Burgard chose dedicated people who would be community representatives. Platt recalled, "We were not musicians. We were simply lay people who were interested in music."

After consultation with many of the Twin Cities' major music organizations and figures, including Minneapolis Symphony music director Antal Dorati, the leaders of the Philharmonic Society announced plans to develop a four-point musical program. The Society's four interdependent tiers would include a youth orchestra, a professional chamber music ensemble to perform in the city's schools, an amateur community orchestra, and a professional chamber orchestra which could give concerts "usually outside the field of a regular symphonic organization."



Among the founders. Officers of the newly created St. Paul Philharmonic Society are shown in this photograph from the November 2, 1958, edition of the St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press. Left to right: Hamilton S. Ross, vice president; Jean West, secretary; Lawrence Platt, Jr., president; and Louis M. Klass, treasurer. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

Lastly, the Society revealed its intentions to hire a paid music director to lead all four of the program's components.

Concurrent with the announcement of the St. Paul Philharmonic Society, Burgard, as president of the Arts Council, was planning a joint fund drive. The campaign, with a goal of about \$150,000, was initiated to raise money for all member organizations of the Council but, as Burgard recalled, the timing was anything but coincidental:

I wanted to have this [chamber] orchestra in place in time to request an allocation from the Arts Council fund. If we'd waited until the second year, it would be much harder to get money for the Philharmonic Society because everything would be set and there would be resentment on the part of other groups.

In the 1950s, funding for the arts in St. Paul was sparse, the largest contributions coming from local government. Burgard sought to improve this, and earmarked \$103,000 of the joint drive for a category called Initial Gifts and aimed directly at foundations and big businesses.

Burgard had a sales job to do not only in the funding community but in the ex-

isting music community. Burgard's decision to establish a *chamber* orchestra as the first professional orchestra in St. Paul since the 1930s was not popular on all fronts. There had been some discussion in the United Arts Council prior to his arrival of augmenting the stature of the existing Civic Orchestra. The union-led Civic, a sixty-five to seventy-five-piece symphony founded in 1949, was composed largely of amateurs from Minneapolis and St. Paul and suffered from a chronic infancy. It had no paid conductor, its audiences were small, and it had problems getting its players to attend rehearsals. Nevertheless, the Civic Orchestra was quite visible and performed annually with traveling ice shows and musicals, as well as a larger group of sixty to seventy musicians contracted by the Women's Institute.

The Civic Orchestra's real advantage was its trust fund, which distributed money to local unions for the presentation of free public concerts by union musicians in schools, hospitals, public parks, and at civic occasions. The so-called Music Performance Trust Fund gave local union officers substantial power to provide employment to union

members as they saw fit. Union leaders were able to recommend projects for which 90 percent of the monies were allocated.

The Philharmonic board was well aware of the authority that the trust fund had given St. Paul's Local 30 musicians union and their Civic Orchestra over the past decade. Burgard said of the union, "It was the only game in town when we first came. And we hadn't built a strong community base yet, so it had considerable power." Rather than try to fight it, the Philharmonic decided to merge with the union-backed Civic Orchestra in January, 1959, forming the St. Paul Civic Philharmonic Society. Vice-president Hamilton Ross remembered that, "We felt that it was harmonious and politic to bring them into it. That might have been a mistake."

The two organizations entered the merger with conflicting ambitions. The Philharmonic expected the Civic to become its amateur arm and wanted to harness its trust fund money. The union wanted the Civic to become the Philharmonic's professional wing while taking advantage of Burgard's joint fund-raising drive with the United Arts Council. The composition of the two boards stood in stark contrast to each other, one being unionized musicians, the other being non-musician community members. Burgard remembered how confrontation began to reveal itself:

They knew about my musical background. They came to me and said, can you help us make this a major symphony? My reaction was one of dismay just knowing what it takes to support a symphony. . . . I decided that what we should really concentrate on professionally was a chamber orchestra to complement the Minneapolis Symphony. It was a foolish waste of money to try and build another symphony and, frankly, I didn't think St. Paul could do it.

By 1959 the decision to create a chamber orchestra apart from the Civic Orchestra had come down to two key issues. First was the physical and financial practicality of a chamber orchestra over the Civic. By keeping the size of the orchestra down to between twenty and thirty players, the Society would have some-

thing unique and distinct from the ninety-plus piece Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra ensemble in which St. Paul could take pride. With a smaller ensemble came the versatility to perform a wider range including the works of many Baroque and contemporary composers which often were ignored by large symphonies. Accordingly, St. Paul could complement rather than compete with the larger symphonic sound of the Minneapolis Symphony. The chamber orchestra format was also less expensive, a factor Larry Platt remembered was critical to an organization just beginning to test the waters of St. Paul's support for the arts: "We had to form something that the community would support, not just drive a contract down someone's throat and then have the community say we're not going to fund it."

Second was the matter of breaking away from union control over selection of personnel. Burgard referred to the Chamber Orchestra as the jewel in the crown of the Philharmonic Society. It therefore had to be exemplary and distinctive as it presided over the other three tiers of the Society's program. Burgard understood that the chamber orchestra format demanded, by its very nature, nothing less than virtuosity from its players. Because of its size, its sound was more transparent than a symphony's, making it easier to pick out individual players and sounds. Burgard explained:

I always felt that the chamber orchestra would have to have top-flight professional musicians . . . that they should not be just Civic Orchestra musicians . . . The Civic Orchestra didn't have that good musicians—they had some, but most of them were not of the caliber that we needed to put a chamber orchestra together.

By taking control out of the hands of a union contractor and placing it solely in the hands of the music director, the community leaders hoped that the Chamber Orchestra would embody professionalism in its selectivity of personnel and programming.

In the summer of 1959, perhaps as much to force a resolution as to get the selections process started, Sam Flor, personnel manager at the Minneapolis Sym-

phony, was hired to begin the initial recruiting of musicians to perform part-time with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra while the search began to find a music director. Flor's bias towards Symphony players, understandable given his connection to it, did not sit well with many of the union directors on the board of the St. Paul Civic Philharmonic Society.

The Society met to decide whether to allow Flor to continue scouting musicians, or to turn the duty over to a union contractor. The vote was tied and Flor's power preserved, but this was not to be the last word. Arguing that not all of its numbers had been accounted for, the union faction called for a new meeting. Board member Ralph Burgard remembered:

There was growing rebellion because Sam wasn't picking the members of the Civic Orchestra that they felt should be picked, and they saw their existence being threatened. And it all got down to a movement on the part of the union and their representatives on the board to fire Sam. I knew this was coming and we lobbied furiously to get all our community members to the table and to that crucial board meeting.

More than Sam Flor's job, the entire concept of the Chamber Orchestra, as disputed between the union and non-union factions, was at stake. The next week, with all the union directors present and accounted for, the board voted again. This time, however, the vote counted one in favor of firing Flor. Just when the community directors thought all was lost, Platt rose to speak:

"As chairman of this body I did not cast a vote; I now cast my vote; the vote is tied and the motion will not carry." At the other side of the table, Ed Ringius, president of the union, stood up and yelled, "This is an outrage! You cannot do that." Platt, red in the face and holding up a copy of Roberts' Rules replied, "Look it up."

In the context of arts in St. Paul, the vote represented a break from the mindset that Minneapolis art institutions like the Symphony were the only models to be followed, and created an opportunity for new organizations like the Chamber

Orchestra to carve out their own niche.

After the vote, the search for a music director picked up pace. Flor was to help in the selection process, but it would be the music director's task to actually build the Chamber Orchestra and its programs from the ground up. It would require someone with the willingness to step off the podium to forge a base of support through the unglamorous and time-consuming youth and amateur education programs which had yet to be organized by the Society.

* * *

The Search Committee was surprised by the flood of applicants it received for the position of music director for the new Chamber Orchestra. With a salary offering of only \$8,000, the Society expected to find only minimal response. It received some seventy-five applications from across the country and abroad, including internationally famous violinist Roman Totenburg. As thrilled as many of the committee members were to have a candidate of Totenburg's renown, others were wary of his expectations. Totenburg did not want to live in St. Paul, but rather conduct a season of ten to twelve weeks with the Chamber Orchestra while he continued to perform nationally and internationally. Burgard confessed, "We were not ready for that. We had to build a community base; it had to be rooted."

The Society's other strong candidate was Leopold Sipe, a less well-known but accomplished violinist and conductor. Sipe did come highly recommended by the director of Holland's International Conductors Seminar, Willem Van Otterloo, who wrote, "Not only was he outstanding in this particular year, but he is one of the finest talents I have seen during the past five years I have directed this program." Sipe had directed the Charlotte Opera Company and, in 1956, the Puget Sound-Tacoma Symphony Orchestra where he led a chamber orchestra ensemble. But perhaps the most appealing aspect of Sipe was his personality. Sipe was young, energetic, amiable—he made no real effort to disguise his southern drawl—and above all, he was willing. Sipe expressed no reservations about taking up a home in St. Paul or about overseeing the activities of the civic and youth

orchestra programs. He seemed ready and able to build the base of support that the Chamber Orchestra would need; and in the fall of 1959, he was hired.

Sipe arrived in September, 1959, and immediately set to work with Sam Flor assembling The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Since the Minneapolis Symphony's season was only eighteen weeks



Leopold Sipe

long—from October through March, with forty-two concerts in the Twin Cities—it was reasonably easy to find alternate concert dates to accommodate the Symphony's schedule as well as qualified musicians eager for additional work. Cellist Eduoard Blitz remembered the unique appeal that the new Chamber Orchestra had: "The people in Minneapolis were delighted because they got to play chamber music and works you don't play with big orchestras." In the end, Sipe and Flor managed to cull twenty-nine players from the Minneapolis Symphony and two from the Civic Orchestra. In addition to playing four concerts with the Chamber Orchestra, the musicians were to perform regularly in smaller ensembles, and act as teachers/mentors for the Society's educational music programs.

Sipe wasted little time laying the groundwork for the Youth Orchestra. He scheduled auditions at St. Paul elementary and middle schools. November auditions for a new Civic Orchestra soon followed. A brochure assured that, "Mr. Sipe will continue to provide an opportu-

nity for amateur and professional musicians in the Twin Cities to play for enjoyment and instruction. Housewives, doctors, businessmen and professional musicians . . . [are] welcome to apply."

Meanwhile, Leopold Sipe had already become somewhat of an evangelist around town for the Philharmonic Society's programs. He spent the first few weeks promoting the aims and needs of the Society throughout St. Paul, in private homes and by radio and television. He spoke to the Women's City Club, the Hamline College Club, and acted as toastmaster on one occasion at a House of Hope Presbyterian Church dinner. Within two months, Sipe had assembled not only a thirty-one-member Chamber Orchestra, but an audience as well.

The newly-formed Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) gave its first concert on Wednesday, November 18, 1959, at 8:30 pm in the St. Paul Central High School Auditorium. The program notes offered what was to become the SPCO's first defined mission statement:

Composed of between 20 and 30 musicians, the Chamber Orchestra will devote the major portion of its programs to the wonderful literature, both classic and contemporary, that is not ordinarily played by large symphonies.

The concert, featuring an orchestra of thirty-one players, opened with Sipe's transcription of Purcell's "Ceremonial Music." What followed ranged, as promised in the notes, from two modern works, Wayne Barlow's "A Winter's Passed" and Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso No. 2*, to *Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 1* and Mozart's *Symphony No. 35*.

John H. Harvey, music critic for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, was impressed. He wrote, "It is both exciting and deeply satisfying to hear Mozart's symphony done with the proper balance between strings and winds. There is an entirely different sound, lighter, gayer and more open than when played by a regulation symphony orchestra." Harvey also praised Sipe's "calmly decisive direction" of the Chamber Orchestra.

As promising as the SPCO's first concert was, there was still unresolved fric-

tion with the Civic Orchestra. After the tie-breaking meeting, many of the union-based directors and musicians they represented were worried about the fate of the Civic Orchestra given that only two of its members had been selected to play with the SPCO. When Sipe called the first meeting of the old Civic Orchestra, only a dozen members showed up. With the help of Nate Applebaum, a firm supporter of the SPCO who had recently succeeded Ed Ringius as president of the Local 30 union, Sipe was able to assure the granting of the union money and visited the local colleges to fill in the ranks for a new Civic Orchestra. By the time of the first concert in Macalester College's Cochran Lounge on February 28, 1960, Sipe had mustered fifty-seven musicians for the Civic, thirty-two of whom came from the Minneapolis Symphony. Sipe recalled that, "After the concert, everybody wanted in the Civic Orchestra. The boycott was over."

Sipe was quickly developing a stronghold of support in the St. Paul community through the Chamber and Civic orchestras, but particularly through the Philharmonic Society's Youth Orchestra. Through auditions at local schools in January, 1960, Sipe managed to acquire twenty-four violinists, eight violists and eight cellists. The students were given the option to buy their instruments from SPCO violinist and music store owner Ted Ptashne after three months in the program and, as Sipe wrote, "The parents thought this was dandy." The parental support network Sipe was building through the Youth Orchestra would prove crucial to audience development for The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in the years to come.

In January, 1960, Ralph Burgard and the United Arts Council successfully completed the joint fund drive and were able to give the Society a grant to fund its first season, Sipe's salary and musicians' fees. The three additional concerts given that year were well received by both the St. Paul and Minneapolis newspapers. John K. Sherman of the *Minneapolis Star* wrote, "Apparently the new St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's policy is not one of just-another-concert, for its programs so far have shown an enterprising spirit . . ."

Yet with the incredible growth in the SPCO's education programs and massive hiring of musicians, money earned from concerts was not enough to fully supplement the Council's grant. Hamilton Ross, Platt's successor as president of the Society, recalled:

We were not earning enough money from ticket sales. I remember at intermission standing up and counting heads—counting at the gate to see how much we made, hoping we'd have enough to write a check. You had to pay the musicians at intermission . . . Louis Klaus was the treasurer and he would always write the checks, and if there wasn't enough money in the bank, Louis would cover them.

By the end of the 1959–60 season, the Society had accumulated a \$2,000 deficit. The treasurer's report stated cash on hand of only \$824. Board members had already become used to paying out of their own pockets, as they had for advertising costs, and then were able to retire the SPCO's deficit among themselves. Sipe responded optimistically to growing concerns that the program was expanding beyond its means, writing to the board:

Any deficit is unfortunate, but it is my opinion that this particular deficit is actually an *investment* for the future, rather than a deficit of the past. The Society has accomplished (or established) most of what it set out to do. It reached thousands of children and many parents through TV. It has touched the discerning concert-goers with the Chamber Orchestra. I have found no parents more enthusiastic than those of the Youth Orchestra students. The Civic Orchestra is active and open to professional and non-professionals alike.

Critic John Harvey lauded the Chamber Orchestra for its short and successful season, but cautioned that "the first season underscored the necessity for obtaining more funds to provide the working time the orchestra needs to realize its full potential." If the SPCO were to continue its growth, the United Arts fund would have to be enlarged, as would the audience.

* * *

Over the next six years, the programs of the St. Paul Philharmonic Society

would expand significantly, broadening the Chamber Orchestra's base of support and garnering critical acclaim that would set the stage for its ascent onto the national stage and transition to full-time professional status.

The music programs of the Society continued to flourish as well. The Civic Orchestra played to capacity crowds at the Hill Reference Library. Its four annual concerts were free to the public which adhered to the provisions of the union trust fund and thereby allowed for its continued use. Demand was so great for the youth program that every fall, beginning in 1962, Sipe formed another forty-member Youth Orchestra, each in a different area of St. Paul. By 1964 there were five youth groups, including the Northwest Junior String Orchestra.

The year 1962 also saw the addition of a music camp to the Philharmonic Society's organizational structure to provide summer training for students of the winter program. Sipe was able to recruit Chamber Orchestra members to teach at the music camp, located just north of Stillwater. By 1964 the camp was attracting 180 music students from all over the Midwest and was largely self-sufficient. With the opportunity to train with professional musicians, and tuition, room and board at \$40 for three to four weeks, the camps were considered a fantastic bargain.

The most valuable return on adding the music camp to the Society's already expanding youth orchestra program was the audience and financial support opportunities it cultivated. Sipe wrote in his autobiography that, "Parents and kids were filling up the hall at Chamber Orchestra concerts." By the SPCO's fifth year, season ticket sales reached \$5,143 or 644 subscribers, exceeding the projected goal of \$4,750. The success of the youth education program had justified the totality of the Philharmonic Society's multi-component approach: the Chamber Orchestra, Civic Orchestra, Youth Orchestras and now the music camp. Although the Chamber Orchestra remained the jewel in the crown of the Society's music programs, it was evident that it would not have been able to exist and flourish without the support of the others.



The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with Leopold Sipe on the podium during its 1968–69 season. Front row, left to right: Henry Gregorian, Bruce Freifeld, Judith Yanchus, Ralph Winkler, Myrna Janzen, Salvatore Venittelli, Edouard Blitz, Cynthia Eddy Britt. Second row, left to right; Hanley Daws, Sherry Steinberg, Carolyn Daws, John Howell, Paula Elliott, Ian Wilson, Lynn Shafer, Celeste O'Brien (harpsichord). Back, left to right: Robert Hansen, Leslie Blake, Thomas Elliott and Max Metzger (bassoons). All photographs, except for that on page 5, are from The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra archives.

That the Society and its programs were beginning take on the status of a cultural fixture in St. Paul is best demonstrated by the appearance of organized community support. In the fall of 1962, the Women's Philharmonic Association (WPA) was formed to coordinate volunteer efforts. Comprised primarily of the mothers of youth orchestra and music camp students, the organization sponsored social engagements, newsletters, letter writing and, most significantly, telephone campaigns run by youth orchestra parents. As board member and music camp organizer Elaine Springsted stated, "women were the backbone" of the Chamber Orchestra's successful season ticket campaigns and were instrumental in enlisting the 644 subscribers for the 1963–64 season. In the same season, the WPA grew to over 200 members.

Artistically, the SPCO was reaching new heights of acclaim and recognition with every season. George Vavoulis, mayor of St. Paul, declared the first week of April, 1963, "Philharmonic Week." Critic John Harvey wrote an open letter in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* to Senator

Hubert Humphrey enthusiastically endorsing a proposal to include the Chamber Orchestra under federal government auspices for future touring abroad. Harvey wrote,

The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra is one of the very few permanent, regularly playing groups of its kind in the nation. Under Mr. Sipe's leadership the orchestra has won itself a secure place in the concert life of this area. The variety and interest of its programs, ranging from Seventeenth century to freshly-written works by contemporary composers, have attracted a substantial and steadily growing audience.

The list of distinguished international artists which the SPCO brought to St. Paul included pianist Ted Lettvin, flutist Jean Pierre Rampal, and cellist Janos Starker. Equally important was the attention Sipe brought to contemporary music and composers which were included on every program. Many of these were SPCO commissions and promoted composers, both local and national, such as Dominique Argento, Zoltán Kodály, Paul Fetler, and Gene Gutché. Sipe's in-

sistence on including modern works along with more well-known pieces was central to the SPCO's mission to provide an alternative to the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, whose programs emphasized more grandiose nineteenth century compositions. Of the symphonies he did perform with the Chamber Orchestra, Sipe often rearranged them himself to accommodate the SPCO's smaller instrumentation.

With the Chamber Orchestra taking root in the St. Paul community, Sipe began to look beyond the city to increase the SPCO's national recognition, its touring, and its size as an ensemble. On January 25, 1964, the SPCO made its first recording. The internationally distributed record included Fetler's *Nothing but Nature*, the SPCO's first commission; Haydn's Symphony in D Major; and a second SPCO commission, Gene Gutché's "Bongo Divertimento," which had had its premiere one season earlier. In a letter discussing the promotional impact the record could have, Sipe wrote, "We are aiming at a resident professional chamber orchestra for St. Paul, one that will do a

considerable amount of touring as well as giving concerts here." Only two months earlier, in celebration of the SPCO's fifth season, the SPCO made its Minneapolis debut at the Guthrie Theater on November 26, 1963. The critics raved. Edwin Bolton of the *Minneapolis Star* called the concert "inspired . . . executed with special vigor and flair," and John Harvey declared it an "unalloyed delight."

While Sipe's aggressive tactics towards expanding the SPCO's reputation had paid off with critical praise and increased exposure, they were not without drawbacks. The Guthrie concert was not a financial success. Society board minutes note that the location discouraged attendance by St. Paulites while Minneapolis residents were lured by a "conflicting engagement." The loss of potential ticket revenue from the Guthrie engagement was one factor among several which contributed to an accumulated deficit of \$9,200 by the following November, a fact that made Philharmonic board members increasingly more anxious. No longer could deficits simply be retired by contributions from the board alone.

All this put more pressure on the Arts and Science Council whose energies and funds were already being pushed to the limit by the proposed Arts and Science Center, the central arts facility now ten years under development. Beset with problems including chronic budget over-runs, legal confusion from use of both private and public funds, bickering architects, and the conflicting needs of the multiple agencies using the facility, the building ended up costing \$3 million by the time it opened on October 25, 1964.

At the heart of the Society's overall financial dilemma were expenses resulting from the phenomenal growth of the organization. The number of SPCO concerts had expanded to six subscription concerts and eight concerts outside the Twin Cities in the first five years. Average attendance at Chamber Orchestra concerts had increased from 150 in the 1959-60 season to almost 700 in the 1963-64 season. In the next year that number was projected to go up by almost 200 people. All this meant higher hall rental costs, soloist fees, and administrative expenses. The total operating budget for the



Violinist Salvatore Venittelli answering questions during a string quartet concert-workshop for St. Paul school children at the Children's Room of the St. Paul Public Library.

1964-65 season had grown to \$46,074. The Arts and Science Council allocation was up to \$21,175 in the same season and would increase in the following year to \$39,508. During the same time period, the Youth Orchestra program had grown to five separate orchestras. Unlike the music camp, these groups were not self-sufficient. For the 1964-65 season, the Youth Orchestra program alone would cost \$14,000.

Sipe realized early on that in order to artistically advance the SPCO, it would be necessary to negotiate a firmer commitment from the musicians. All this meant that even more financial support would need to be raised, a prospect which the Philharmonic Society's board looked upon with trepidation. The foremost question in Sipe's mind was whether the Society would eventually be willing and able to make a commitment to the musicians by offering them full-time contracts. Hamilton Ross described Sipe's outlook:

I remember talking to Leopold, saying, now you can't be hiring more musicians when we are in a deficit position. We can't earn enough money. Sipe replied; Ham! I've been living with deficits all my life. There's no problem with deficits.

The decision of whether to permanently hire musicians would initially hinge not on the courageousness of the

board, but rather on a certain friendly rival across the river in Minneapolis.

* * *

In the summer of 1965, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra signed a new contract with the musicians union which guaranteed the Symphony players employment for forty-five weeks of the year by 1970. The resulting situation for the Philharmonic Society was grave. Minneapolis Symphony personnel constituted practically the entire Chamber Orchestra, as well as private instructors for the youth orchestras and faculty for the music camp. With the new contract, the SPCO could no longer depend on Minneapolis Symphony personnel who would become increasingly less available over the next five years. In an October, 1965, article, John Harvey posed the critical question, "Will events force the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra to go major league to continue?"

The Society was already planning a new course of action. In the fall the Society, in cooperation with the Arts Council, began to test the waters of foundation support with a proposal to create a resident orchestra core comprised of twelve professional musicians whose services could be counted on at all times:

It is apparent that the St. Paul Philharmonic must engage a resident orchestra if it is to continue its community program of music

education and services to St. Paul and the Northwest. There is no longer any doubt that the transition from musicians on a "job-contract" basis to ones engaged for specific services on a full-time basis must be made with careful haste... As a "borrowing group" the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra faces ultimate extinction.

In the next few months, the Philharmonic received several letters of support from prominent community and state leaders. These included Minnesota Governor Karl Rolvaag, Minneapolis Mayor Arthur Naftalin, and St. Paul Mayor George Vavoulis. Arts and Science Council President C. E. Bayliss Griggs wrote encouragingly, "It is our opinion that your youth programs and the activities of the Chamber Orchestra are contributing heavily to the growth of music in this region... We stand ready to assist you in every way possible in the future."

On May 20, 1966, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra made its New York City concert debut on the Concert Party Series at the Biltmore Hotel Ballroom. The *New York Times* critic was kind, calling the SPCO a "good, earnest group." But *St. Paul Pioneer Press* critic John Harvey recognized the true significance of the performance, commending it as proof that from its inception the Philharmonic Society intended "to build an organization which would redound to the credit of St. Paul in the eyes of the nation."

The following December, the Society announced its revised plan to engage nine full-time musicians for the 1967-68 season. These musicians would constitute the core of the Chamber Orchestra and would also form a string ensemble and a woodwind quintet. The remaining eleven would have part-time contracts covering rehearsal and performances, but all twenty would draw their major employment from the SPCO. They would perform in an expanded twenty-concert season to be presented at the new 650-seat Crawford Livingston Theatre in the St. Paul's Arts and Science Center. There were plans for national touring, including the full ensemble and woodwind quintet, in the coming year. In addition, the full-time musicians would be contracted to

participate in the Society's educational programs. Now that the musician core was no longer obligated to conform to the time schedules of two orchestras, they could better meet the teaching and performing needs of the music camp and local college appearances, the fees from which would help subsidize the musicians.

The Philharmonic Society marked the completion of its eighth season in 1966-67 with a letter addressed to season ticket subscribers which proclaimed, "We now enter a new phase in the life of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra." The

St. Paul Chamber Orchestra*
Leopold Sipe, Conductor

All Orchestral Program

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1959
8:30 pm, CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

I. Ceremonial Music	<i>Parcell-Sipe</i>
Voluntary in C Major	
Voluntary in D Major	
Trumpet Tune	
II. The Winter's Passed	<i>Wayne Barlow</i>
III. Brandenburg Concerto	<i>J. S. Bach</i>
No. 1, F Major	
Allegro	
Adagio	
Allegro	
Menuet-Trio I-Polacca-Trio II	
INTERMISSION	
IV. Concerto Grosso No. 2	<i>Ernest Bloch</i>
Maestoso-Allegro-Maestoso	
Andante	
Allegro	
Misterioso-Allegro	
V. Symphony No. 35 ("Halfner")	<i>W. A. Mozart</i>
Allegro con spirito	
Andante	
Menuet-Trio	
Presto	

* Maintained by the St. Paul Civic Philharmonic Society

letter touted its new resident orchestra core and announced the creation of the business manager position to begin July 1, 1967. George Michaelson already had been working as part-time business manager since April. His central task was to raise funds to support the new positions. The cost of the nine new musicians alone was one-and-a-half times that of the entire 1965-66 expense budget of \$50,000. Michaelson embarked on a plan to increase contributed income by soliciting more foundation and Arts and Science Council support and to boost earned income by expanding the tours and appearances of the Chamber Orchestra and its

component ensembles.

The Council, although it raised the Philharmonic Society's allocation, was only able to deliver a little over half of its promise. Michaelson made a desperate and successful plea to foundations. Special foundation income, both solicited and voluntary, added \$18,000 to the total Council figure. While a definite sign of improvement, these fund-raising figures overall indicated a narrow and tentative response to the Society's new resident program when compared to monies allocated to Minneapolis. The proof of whether the concept of a full-time resident chamber orchestra in St. Paul was feasible would have to come from ticket sales and other sources of earned income. Season ticket sales, the earliest indicator, were not what had been expected. But as the October board minutes explained, low sales were a factor of increasing competition:

The Chamber Orchestra is not the only performing organization in the area in which sales are down. Most organizations in the performing arts are suffering the same malady since there are only about 30,000 people in this area who attend concerts, and they are now faced with deciding among so many events.

The solution to this was clear to Michaelson and Sipe. Touring had long been a priority on Sipe's agenda as a means of both improving the reputation of the SPCO and capitalizing on its unique attributes: its mobility and chamber ensemble components. Sipe believed that the future of the American orchestra lay in the chamber orchestra genre. In a newspaper interview he stated:

The market for the chamber orchestra is obvious... The cost of maintaining 100 men on stage is becoming so astronomical that in a couple decades or so I think there's only going to be a dozen or so large orchestras left. The resident orchestras will be chamber orchestras. And there will definitely be more of them.

Michaelson concurred with Sipe on the promise that touring held for the SPCO, but set his sights a little lower. Over the 1967-68 season various components of the Chamber Orchestra toured.

The woodwind quintet traveled for seven weeks in the Midwest and the strings of the SPCO played throughout the state in regular concerts. Michaelson boasted that the SPCO was the "only publicly-owned chamber orchestra in the United States. We are, in effect, writing the book for towns of this size around the country on how to do it"

Michaelson had spoken too soon. The woodwind quintet had to be temporarily discontinued the following year due to insufficient profits from the tour. It was also decided that the strings would have to expand into three or four quartets in order to yield a substantial profit. The Chamber Orchestra itself had to withdraw from nine of its touring engagements.

George Michaelson had discovered the hard way that there were not enough part-time musicians in the Twin Cities available for the tour, nor was it economically feasible to hire from other areas and pay the rehearsal and transportation costs for single or connected dates. It quickly became evident to Michaelson that nine full-time musicians were not sufficient to keep the SPCO afloat and competitive. He wrote:

It is imperative that this orchestra like any other orchestra travel to other communities in order to meet its payroll . . . And it is necessary to go where the engagements are, consistent with economical travel routing. In order to develop a proper ensemble and have it available for sales, it is necessary to have a full-time professional resident orchestra of 23 members.

This pitch from the business manager came as a slight shock to the Philharmonic board which had originally planned the number of full-time musicians to increase gradually. The expansion would cost in excess of \$100,000. Still, board members saw little other choice than to go along with Michaelson. Putting their best face forward they announced plans for a twenty-one-member, full-time professional chamber orchestra for the 1968-69 season.

Getting publicity for the move was not hard. The SPCO had received high marks from critics in the past season for its use of the nine core musicians. John Harvey wrote, "The musicians have already

melded into a close-knit and well adjusted ensemble." *Minneapolis Star* music critic John Sherman wrote, "Upgrading the good to the better (and possibly best) . . . St. Paul's chamber orchestra is off to a flying start, and reaffirms its place among the Twin Cities' top rank musical organizations." In addition, St. Paul Mayor Thomas R. Byrne declared the last week of September, 1968, "Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Week."

Meanwhile Michaelson was busy laying the groundwork for the latest incarnation of the SPCO. His second try at organizing a tour was, by all appearances, quite impressive. There were two proposed tours. The Fall tour would last twelve days and cover twelve cities in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Canada. The second tour, lasting four weeks beginning in February, was more extensive. It spanned eight cities, including Chicago and Columbus on its way to the east coast where it would visit seven more cities. Furthermore, there were also hints of a possible tour to Europe.

Both Sipe and the Society board were impressed, and plans proceeded with the hiring of the full orchestra. Five of the musicians from the previous year's core returned. With the new musicians, the SPCO was certainly national in its composition, if not yet in its reputation. Young talent poured in from Amsterdam, Hawaii, Kentucky, Boston, and Canada, as well as Minnesota.

However, just as quickly as things were coming together, they began to unravel. The problems started back in May, 1968, when the Philharmonic board was faced with a \$37,000 deficit, due in large part to the \$20,475 in defaulted touring income. The proposed number of twenty-three musicians had to be reduced to twenty-one. An advance of \$22,500 was acquired from the Arts and Science Council to relieve the deficit, but more trouble was around the corner. In August, when Don Wolkoff assumed the presidency of the Board, he discovered an impending disaster. Wolkoff remembered it: "I met with George [Michaelson] and found out that really what we had was one firm tour date and that was in Winona. That was the extent of the tour bookings." Winona had not even been on the original

tour itinerary of thirty cities. By August 13, all the contracts for the tours were still tentative, including dates for the rapidly approaching fall tour. Michaelson wrote, "We will be able to pay the bills and meet the payroll through August . . . We will be in trouble in September if we don't get our ticket sales going and/or some Foundation support soon."

The situation did not improve. An emergency board meeting was called for November 18, 1968—exactly nine years from the first Chamber Orchestra concert—to plot out a plan of action for a Philharmonic Society that was by this point in serious peril. The organization was looking at a possible deficit of \$230,000 comprised of \$105,000 in budget shortfall plus a substantial over-draft at the First National Bank. Expenses had risen, the largest item being \$161,858 in musicians' salaries, while income had fallen because of factors ranging from the tour fiasco to a loss of college services. Board member Andrews Allen articulated what was a common theme that evening, stating bluntly, "We have done a lousy job. We went into the professional chamber orchestra business without a professional approach . . . To me there is no point in talking about saving the Chamber Orchestra or raising \$50,000 or \$100,000 until we put our internal house in order." To alleviate the more immediate financial problems, the board decided to request an advance on the January allotment from the Arts and Science Council and negotiate a loan of up to \$100,000 from the bank. Long-term soul searching would have to wait for the months to come.

Michaelson had bet the farm on touring and lost. The SPCO still had to prove to the community that it was worthwhile to spend in excess of \$200,000 on a second full-time Twin Cities orchestra. In December, 1968, Michaelson announced his resignation effective February 28, 1969, but not before one last ditch effort to save the SPCO from imminent collapse. Michaelson had managed to salvage from the defunct Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra a tour which would take the SPCO through the Southwest and conclude with an engagement at Carnegie Hall. The SPCO thus got a sec-



Young musicians at SPCO's summer Music Camp held near Stillwater. Students from all over the Midwest came to the camp.

ond chance at national touring exposure, but as cellist Eddie Blitz remembered, "It was do or die."

The Carnegie Hall concert on February 20, 1969, was a success and gave the SPCO a much needed boost of morale. *New York Times* music critic Donal Henahan wrote, "At Friday night's concert at Carnegie Hall, Leopold Sipe put his St. Paul Orchestra through a program that would have strained the talents of any such organization, and brought it off most successfully." It was a triumphant conclusion to what had been a trying and emotional tour for the orchestra. Days before the Carnegie engagement, the SPCO musicians received word that, under the advice of the Arts and Science Council, the Philharmonic board had decided not to renew their contracts for a period of thirty to forty-five days. On February 14, letters were mailed to Sipe and the musicians asking for patience and understanding during the critical months to come. A disheartened Sipe wrote back:

"Needless to say, the Council and Philharmonic decision is very disappointing . . . It's hard to know whether to chance hanging on a little longer or begin to try to relocate."

On February 17 the decision as to whether to stay in business came down to one motion. Board member Bob Gumnit declared, "I move that this organization declare bankruptcy and disband next Monday." The motion failed for lack of a second, but it had served its incendiary purpose. The board decided, "having no other alternative for continuing viability," to go out immediately and solicit the funds needed to keep the doors open. Sipe finally had the full-time professional chamber orchestra and national tour he had long desired, but it remained to be seen whether this was at a price the community was willing to pay, or if he himself could survive.

* * *

Stephen Sell took over as SPCO manager in March of 1969 while it was still in

the depths of its crisis. Sell had come highly recommended from the Pittsburgh Symphony. There, he learned to run orchestras with the complex business acumen they had come to require. He worked by an audacious philosophy which he kept inscribed on a card in his desk: "When you're getting run out of town, get in front of the crowd and make it look like a parade." Whatever reservations Sell may have had about taking on the ailing organization were assuaged by Philharmonic board president Don Wolkoff:

I remember a lunch we had and he said—you know, why should I come? And I said, because I don't think you've got anything to lose. If you fail, you haven't failed on anything that wasn't going down the tubes anyway. If you succeed you're a hero.

Sell's first task—the negotiation of union contracts—was trial by fire. Local 30 already had questioned the legality of the suspension of musician contracts in February. The issues on the table, such as contract renewal time frames and the extent of the musicians' educational duties, sparked heated debate at the board meetings. In March the Society resolved to retain its Chamber Orchestra and sent a letter to the musicians promising the renewal of their contracts. After numerous objections back and forth, the options narrowed down to three for the musicians: 1) continue the old contract 2) accept a new contract as it stood or 3) give the Society their moral commitment that they planned to stay with the SPCO while the master contracts continued to be negotiated. All the musicians except one turned in the moral commitment statement. But without a formal commitment on paper, the Society had little recourse, and by June two musicians had already resigned.

The whole process of contract negotiations brought tensions and philosophical issues to the surface that split the board down the middle. Sipe was not happy with the loss of control over his musicians. He addressed the board, stating:

For all the disadvantages to the Society of the new agreement, if we are to have an orchestra in the fall, it seems imperative to ratify the contract now, get the contract letters

out, and in two weeks we will know definitely who will be returning and who won't.

Sipe and others had problems with elements of the new contract, including the looseness of the grip on personnel, the artistic control given the musicians, and the non-specific mention of educational duties. Many more would leave the SPCO in the next year. The contract referred to the Orchestra as an "ensemble of individual artists" which would have more input into the hiring and firing process via a seven-member review committee composed of musicians. SPCO violinist Carolyn Daws recalled the importance of this provision:

There were no procedures as far as terminating a contract was concerned . . . Every year [Sipe] could hire you and fire you. We didn't have any security from one year to the next. And when contracts came out in February the first thing you did was look to see if you'd be rehired again. It wasn't whether you were going to get a pay increase or anything.

But many of the older board members, whom Leopold Sipe himself had helped bring to the board, felt that if the music director were to be held accountable for maintaining the highest artistic standard, the authority to hire and fire should rest with him. Elaine Springsted, who already had notified the board of her intention to resign, wrote: "I feel this contract, in terms of employment, puts the orchestra above the St. Paul Philharmonic Society, its employer, and the conductor." Some board members felt that the totality of the Philharmonic Society program beyond the Chamber Orchestra had been lost amidst the musicians' demands. The SPCO had built a reputation on having the only contract in the country that included educational activity, and roots forged in the community by its youth and education programs had always provided a primary justification for expansion. This time, however, no specific mention was made of teaching and a youth program. The implication was that education, at least as many of the long-time board members had known it, was no longer an integral part of the organization's mission.

The SPCO was not alone in experiencing growing pains. The 1960s had been a time of explosive expansion for American orchestras. All over the nation orchestras were extending their seasons, administrative and artistic staffs, and musicians' contracts. Between 1961 and 1970 budgetary expenses for twenty-eight major orchestras rose 197 percent. The cost of artistic staff grew 173 percent, and the number of contracts went from 2,786 to 4,501. During the same period, however, income grew only 137 percent. The income gap, or the discrepancy between expense and income, had the greatest increase at 210 percent.

Expansion in general for the performing arts was a difficult process of trial and error. Faced with rising operating costs, the SPCO could have increased its ticket prices. But this was not considered wise given increased competition in the centrally funded and expanding Twin Cities arts environment. Under Sell, the SPCO placed a greater emphasis on soliciting contributed income to supplement earned income from ticket sales and music programs.

Sell wasted no time in broadening the base of supplemental income. The Council had decided to permit a special cash fund drive, provided the SPCO agree to approach certain sources. In May, 1969, he traveled to Washington to meet with officials of the National Endowment for the Arts. Upon his return, Sell reported to the Philharmonic board, "I received some rather good advice in terms of what they like to hear from proposals. Many fall into the kind of things we have been talking about here." Sell went on to visit the State Department, Columbia Artists Management, Inc. and Connoisseur Society Records, and the Ford Foundation, all of which "expressed considerable interest in the Chamber Orchestra because of our flexibility."

Steve Sell busied himself in the summer of 1969, bringing the Society out of its immediate financial crisis with help from a \$150,000 grant from the Bush Foundation, a loan from the First National Bank and additional emergency funds from the Council. He also completed negotiations on the contracts which continued the musicians educa-

tional responsibilities but through a new program of community outreach and economic opportunity he called "Music on the Move."

Announced in August, 1969, "Music on the Move" was Sell's attempt to capitalize on the flexibility and mobility of the SPCO by bringing the Orchestra to new audiences outside the Twin Cities which had been neglected throughout the 1960s. Under the terms of the Bush Foundation grant, community organizations were allowed to hire the SPCO at a fraction of the actual cost. Sell began to book community and college residencies. These included residencies at six area colleges where the Chamber Orchestra would stay for up to a week to work and perform with students. There were lecture demonstrations at elementary and high school concerts. Sell arranged an extensive series of church concerts, teacher clinics, workshops, master classes and open rehearsals. Orchestra extension or "outreach" services would take the SPCO to libraries, parks, museums, and community centers. No mention, however, was made in the eight-page, promotional newsletter for "Music on the Move" of either the Youth or the Civic Orchestra program.

"Music on the Move" was in many ways a matter of economic survival for the SPCO, and as Sell stated, "We couldn't keep the orchestra together, financially, on just our concert income." Sell shared Sipe's vision that chamber orchestras were the musical institutions of the future. Sell argued that even though larger orchestras also needed to increase community services to develop more earned income, their sheer size made it "hopelessly impractical." He posed the question, "What high school can afford \$2,000 to bring a major symphony into its auditorium?" Sell made a case to the boards of numerous foundations that the SPCO was uniquely situated to utilize extension services to boost its earned income from 42 percent of the budget in 1969-70, to more than 50 percent.

In addition, funders like the Bush Foundation, Ford Foundation and the NEA looked with encouragement upon outreach activities. While the SPCO's program was distinctive in its scope and

tactics, it was part of a larger trend reflecting emerging political and social mores which emphasized more public accessibility and public education in the arts. As one local arts manager recalled of the time: "Funding was available if you did outreach. [You] had to prove outreach in every grant proposal." Several St. Paul arts organizations such as COMPAS (Community Programs in the Arts and Sciences), Chimera Theater and CLIMB Theater emerged during the late-1960s and 1970s with missions focused on outreach activities.

"Music on the Move" became a tremendous tool for encouraging new, younger audiences to appreciate orchestras and their artistry, thereby generating earned revenue from sources that traditionally would not have been available. The program was highly successful and new projects were added, including "22 in 22" which took each of the musicians to separate St. Paul public schools for a series of morning lectures and demonstrations. The SPCO continued to push the definition of where an acclaimed musical institution could perform and included in its season a concert at the Stillwater prison. The response from musicians to the new program, though skeptical at first, was one of great enthusiasm. Sell commented: "These activities make the orchestra more attractive to musicians—the variety appeals to them. In fact we get enough spontaneous applications to form at least three more orchestras each year now."

By 1972 the income generated from these extra projects, in addition to their regular concerts in three series—the Capital, Baroque and Unusual or Explorations Series—allowed the SPCO to expand to a forty-four-week contract, with eight services allowed per week. The same year the Chamber Orchestra's program had expanded to 100 events a year. Never before had the SPCO been so busy or so successful.

As "Music on the Move" brought the SPCO far beyond the city of St. Paul, into surrounding suburbs and out to small-town Minnesota, the organization continued to struggle internally to define its identity within the Twin Cities. Could the SPCO continue to grow artistically and



Students with their string instruments at Ames School in 1962-63 rehearsing for Mr. Bukla.

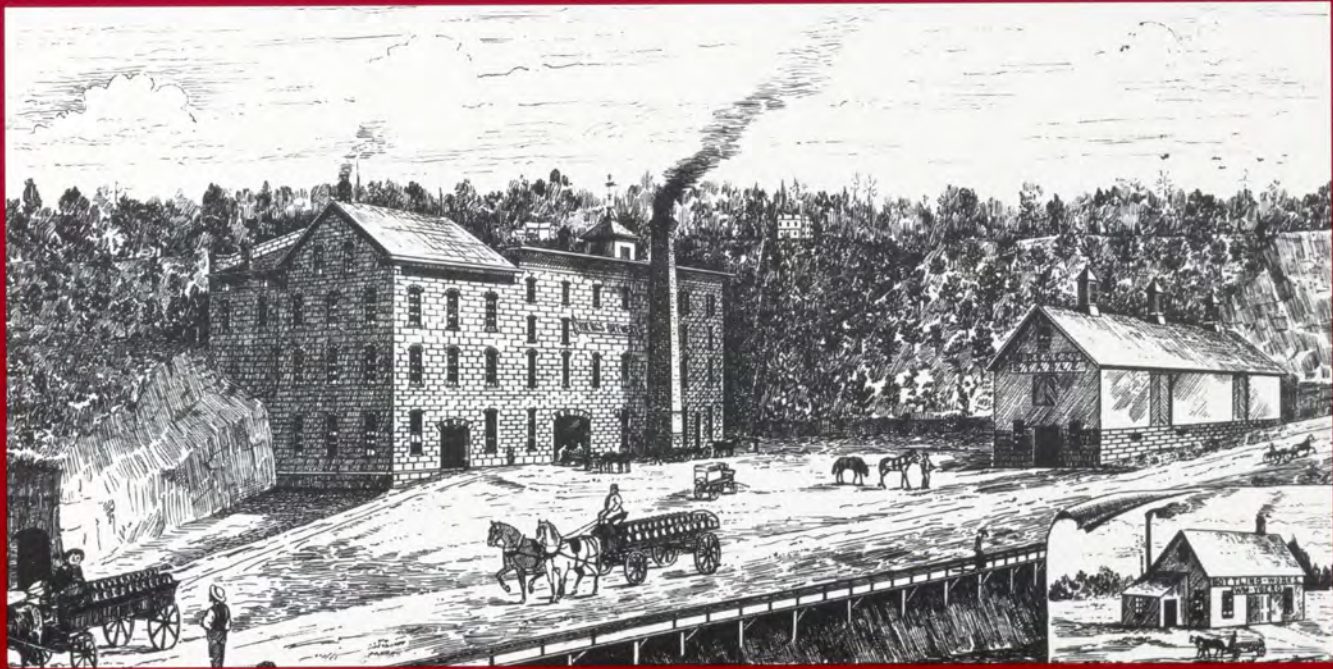
broaden its national and international reputation without outgrowing the vital grassroots community relationship that had created and sustained it for over ten years?

The division between new and old schools of thought was never more clearly articulated than by one board member's assertion in 1969: "We have from time to time discussed tradition. As far as I am concerned we really are a two-year-old organization. Before, we were really an amateur organization." This statement signaled, in essence, an imminent purge of all that was considered "amateur." Within two years the Philharmonic Society would see over half of its board leave and its music director fired. Within the next five years the music camp was abandoned, and the Youth and Civic orchestras severed from the organization.

Throughout the 1970s, the new guard of the Chamber Orchestra pushed the boundaries of artistic and programmatic convention, sometimes to the outrage, sometimes to the praise of their public. Into the 1980s the SPCO sought to recapture some of the traditional support it felt

had been alienated during the daring and experimental Dennis Russell Davies era. More recently with the Artistic Commission and resurrection of the "Music on the Move" theme, renewed emphasis has been placed on the SPCO's distinctive role in the Twin Cities and world arenas as a premier chamber orchestra and advocate for new music. In retrospect, the first ten years provide a template for the timeless ambitions, successes, conflicts and ideas which define an institution still capable of reinvention and innovation but firmly rooted in the powerful legacy of its founders.

Glenn Perachio is a graduate of Carleton College with a degree in history. A freelance historian for the SPCO, he also creates and manages in-house research data bases for the Doherty, Rumble and Butler law firm. An annotated copy of this article and the article beginning on page 16 are available at the Ramsey County Historical Society, 323 Landmark Center, St. Paul, 55102 (222-0701).



Anthony Yoerg's brewery as it looked in 1886. From Northwest Magazine for November of that year. Minnesota Historical Society photograph. See article beginning on page 16.

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