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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

## **Orchestra has earned city's respect, support**

I am writing in response to the question: Should tax dollars be spent to support art groups such as Orchestra London?

As a Canadian with European background, I find it sad that this is an issue open to debate. Culture should be an integral part of life in any community. Throughout history, it has been the hallmark of all great civilizations. It is what sets us apart from animals.

As a member of the volunteer committee of Orchestra London, I can assure Londoners that the orchestra does not just sit back and wait for a handout from the city, as has been implied by London Free Press journalists time and time again. A lot of individual resources and time are put into fund-raising efforts.

The staff at the orchestra office work from morning until night, all of them trying to do two people's jobs.

The musicians put their hearts and souls into their work, which pays barely more than welfare. Most of them have two to three jobs to make ends meet. The thought of them taking wage cuts, deferring wages and donating money to the orchestra is truly heartbreaking. I admire their dedication and resilience for the way they keep giving their best to this community in the face of constant adversity.

I believe that Orchestra London has more than earned the respect and support that city council is so reluctant to give them.

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London