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## **Music refund possible**

Free Press staff

Orchestra London musicians may get larger refunds from old tax returns since the orchestra has been billed for Ontario's employer health tax, a provincial spokesperson said.

The musicians have to contact the Finance Ministry and file revised income tax returns which probably will lead to a refund.

The orchestra was audited last month by the ministry, which decided it should have been paying the tax as far back as 1995. The orchestra had treated its musicians as independent contractors and left it to them to pay their own health insurance premium.

The ministry handed the orchestra a \$128,000 bill. To cover the cost, the orchestra is asking the city for a loan.

Board of control Ok'd it without comment yesterday, an endorsement that goes before council next week.

Orchestra general manager David Haward, who is also a bassoonist in the orchestra, said the musicians need tax advice. The orchestra intends to appeal the ministry ruling and if it's successful, musicians who submitted revised tax returns may have to pay back their newly gained refund.

Haward said orchestra board members have contacted Tory MPPs Dianne Cunningham (London-North-Centre) and Bob Wood (London West) who vowed to look into it. It's a provincewide issue since most orchestras treat their musicians as contractors. The annual cost of the employer health tax for Orchestra London is estimated at \$28,000.