

Friday, February 18, 2000

Orchestra London in the red

CBC RADIO ARTS

LONDON, Ont. - Another Ontario orchestra is in financial trouble. Orchestra London has announced that it is out of cash and is days away from being unable to meet its current financial obligations.

David Stelpstra, the president of Orchestra London, says the orchestra needs a minimum of \$110,000 to get through the end of its current season.

He cites federal and provincial funding cuts to the orchestra as part of the reason for its current situation. An Ontario tax ruling related to the status of the musicians has also added to the orchestra's woes.

Ontario's Ministry of Finance hit the orchestra with a \$128,000 bill for back taxes and penalties. But Stelpstra says the lack of financial support from the city of London itself is at the heart of the matter. The city provides an annual grant of \$125,000 to the orchestra, but that is paid back to the city in the form of rent for the orchestra's performance venue Centennial Hall.

Stelpstra says the orchestra will go before London city council on Monday night to plead its case for more money from the city.