

Friday March 05, 1999

## **Thunder Bay Symphony musicians vote on their employee status**

CBC Radio Arts

**THUNDER BAY** - Musicians with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra have taken a vote on their status as employees with the Orchestra. Last November, a tax court ruled that the Orchestra's musicians were employees.

The Symphony had argued they were independent contractors. The ruling was significant because it meant the musicians could no longer claim deductions as self employed persons. It also meant that the Symphony Association would have to pay their employment insurance, pension, vacation pay and other benefits.

This week, the musicians voted on whether to remain employees or revert to self employed status. The musicians representative, Penny Clarke, won't reveal the results of the vote until upcoming contract negotiations with the Symphony Association have been concluded.

But a spokesperson with Revenue Canada says that, regardless of the results of the vote, the musicians would still be considered employees unless the terms of their employment changed. The spokesperson says the tax court's decision was binding and any appeal would be heard by a Federal Court.