

December 10 1999 11:30:10 pm

## **Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra looks for new conductor**

JACK JULIAN - CBC Radio

**THUNDER BAY** - Despite its ongoing financial problems, the Thunder Bay Symphony is continuing its hunt for a new conductor. The chair of the search committee is confident he'll find the right person to wave the baton, but he admits the search isn't easy. At least four other Canadian symphonies are in the market these days, including Vancouver and London, Ontario.

George Holburne says TBSO's recent bankruptcy scare doesn't help his sales pitch, but he's up-front with all applicants.

"We give them our track record. We tell them exactly what the situation is, and how energetic and charged the workers we do have are working toward a solution."

Holburne thinks the orchestra's high-calibre musicians will tip the balance in his favour. Victor Sawa, a visiting conductor, agrees. He's one of five finalists for the job.

"Listen, I'll tell you for Thunder Bayers themselves," Sawa says, "this is the best kept secret in the North. I can't believe the quality. I think this is the best young orchestra in Canada."

Holburne and his committee won't be making up their minds for quite some time. Auditions and interviews won't be done until March, when the two-year process will be nearly complete.