

# Loss of Detroit aid led to DSO deficit

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Detroit Symphony Orchestra management traced its budget and strike problems to the failure of the city of Detroit to contribute a \$1.1 million grant last year.

"I guess the people we should ask questions of are in the city of Detroit," said state Sen. Norman Shinkle, R-Monroe County, as state lawmakers probed what was happening to its grants to the shut-down orchestra.

The outline of DSO's financial mis-

fortunes was made last week to a special Senate committee chaired by Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills. Musicians said they were "locked out" when they refused to take an 11 percent pay cut in September.

ANOTHER DEADLINE came and

went Friday as the DSO's executive committee took no action on the suggestion by chairman Walter J. McCarthy Jr. of Birmingham that the remainder of the 1987-88 season be cancelled.

"No decisions were made," a DSO publicist said after the morning meeting.

Sensations told DSO president Oleg Lobanov they were particularly distressed that the 25-concert Christmas season was cancelled and lectured him about the need to reach a new contract agreement.

The Legislature voted DSO a \$2.7 million grant this year, paid \$1.7 million of it in September but is considering withholding the \$1 million December payment.

"I don't think the state should make the next payment unless we get some music," said Sen. Lana Pollock, D-Ann Arbor.

"We would agree," said Lobanov, who was almost drowned out by applause from musicians union members in the audience of the ornate Appropriations Committee room on the third floor of the State Capitol in Lansing.

"If the season is shortened, I suspect the Legislature will cut the appropriation by however much the season is shortened," said Sen. Vern Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids.

LOBANOV GAVE this outline of

the DSO's financial troubles:

When he was hired as president and chief staff man in 1985, DSO had an accumulated deficit of \$2.8 million. "There were no deficits in 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86," he said. Meanwhile, attendance improved, and musicians' pay was raised.

In 1986-87, however, DSO spent \$14.2 million and took in \$12.8 million — a deficit of \$1.4 million. "The largest single part, a \$1.1 million variance, was from the city of Detroit, which found itself not able to make its grant," Lobanov said.

After DSO closed its books for the fiscal year, the city came through with \$250,000, less than one-quarter of what had been expected, and Lobanov said that was put into the current year's budget.

McCarthy and Lobanov asked the musicians to take a cut from \$910 a week to \$810 — or 11 percent, roughly the same as the '86-87 deficit. All people paid at the level of musicians or higher were cut 11 percent, and those paid less were cut smaller percentages, Lobanov said.

Musicians — full-time performers, the conducting staff and supplementals — absorb about half the operating budget, according to his figures. Other costs, Lobanov said, are audience development, public relations, guest artists, affirmative ac-

tion programs and special Detroit programs.

AS OTHER senators drifted in and out of the hearing, Faxon probed the DSO-union collective bargaining procedures.

Lobanov said McCarthy and top management told musicians at three July meetings the budget was 11 percent out of balance, using the word "cutbacks."

But Linton Bodwin, string bass player and spokesman for the musicians bargaining team, said management's "first offer" didn't come until Sept. 11, three days before the old contract expired, and was a "take it or leave it" demand for an 11 percent cut.

"The musicians never took a strike vote. It was a lockout," said Bodwin. "We are currently in mediation."

Bryan Kennedy, horn player, added that some musicians make a "very supplemental" income by teaching.

The union's first proposal was a weekly salary of \$1,080 by the end of a three-year contract, the same as the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

MUSICIANS AND five women volunteers described a DSO governance structure where, in Kennedy's words, "power does not flow up (from contributors). It flows down (from McCarthy and Lobanov)."

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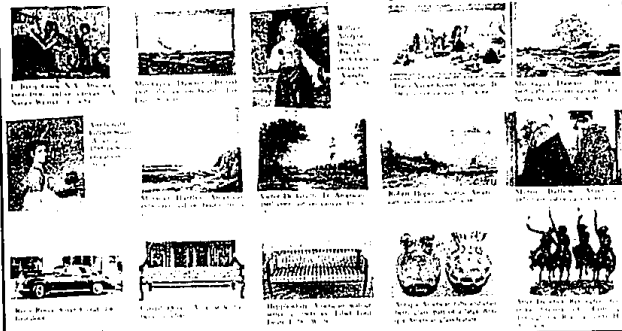
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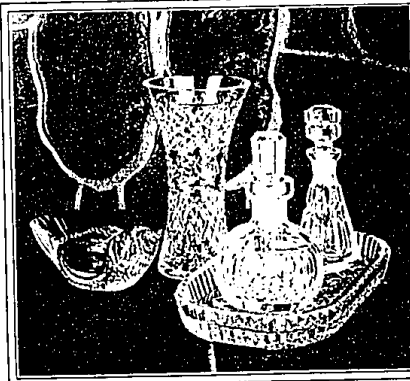
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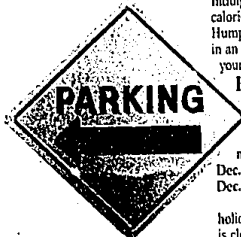
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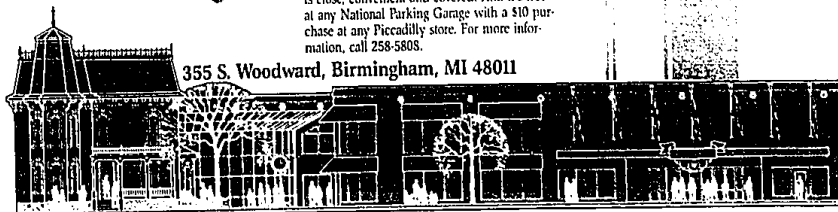
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