

Dorati and His Orchestra

Antal Dorati, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra, made the following comments to his musicians last Monday, when the threat of a strike hung over the orchestra. The transcript was provided by WRC-4, which broadcast the statement on its news programs. The musicians voted later that day to accept a contract offer, and a strike was averted.

We all have our endeavors and we all want to improve our situation and we are justified, craving, for progress in every way. I am not here to talk to you about that. This is your business, this is a business matter; every profession has its business side. Our own has another very important side and that is our art.

Now I must tell you a very hard thing. When I met you two years ago as your chief, the part of art in this group was very neglected, and I made it my business to put it in the foreground. You have been with me in this very splendid fashion, and yet I feel that I have not achieved what I set out to achieve because of this.

It is very cheap to make comparisons. For instance, to

say that an artist is a priest of some kind, or that an artist is a doctor of some kind. This has been said before. Yet the greatest truths in life are things we have often said and often thought.

I cannot imagine the priest denying service to anyone who comes. I cannot imagine a doctor refusing help, and I cannot imagine an artist who's not performing his art for the people because if we are not convinced that this is as important as solace and health, we aren't artists and that is above every other consideration, and it is then probably my weakness that I could not get this through to you in strong enough form.

Yet such a moment does arise. I have seriously considered to leave you because of this failure of mine. I have not done it so far because I have not given up hope that this is kind of a nightmare and as of this moment this didn't happen yet. You are not on strike, and the season can begin even on a, how to say it, on a temporary basis if you are willing to give this guarantee which is asked of you: the guarantee of an artist not to falter, not to fail, the public.

Mark. Star 1972 Oct. 8.

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