

The Toil of Symphony Taping

Willis, Thomas

Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); Apr 7, 1970;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune (1849-1988)

pg. B5



As members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and recording engineers listen, Georg Solti [center, foreground] confers with his producer, David Harvey, and the symphony's co-concertmaster, Victor Aitay, in temporary control room, at Medinah Temple.

The Toil of Symphony Taping

BY THOMAS WILLIS

● ONE COULD sympathize with Georg Solti last night when he said "It's a hard life."

The statement interrupted sips from a thermos cup and sharp professional commentary on the recording of Mahler's Sixth Symphony being played thru loudspeakers only a few feet away. Mr. Solti, his current producer, David Harvey, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's co-concertmaster, Victor Aitay, were sandwiched between the speakers and a formidable array of mixing, monitoring, and recording equipment jammed into an area next to one of the Medinah Temple men's rooms.

The orchestra had recorded that portion of the symphony only moments before. This was the first playback of the raw tape. Other principal players from the symphony crowded in. Several brought their music. A few had full scores. So did the engineers. Stereotyped notions aside, high fidelity

technicians can read music.

Mr. Solti's comments were repeated to the players spread across the temple's vast stage during the following ten minutes. Measure by measure he delivered a rapid fire barrage of corrections and changes. The staff from London Decca moved at a lope, adjusting equipment, whispering instructions, holding hurried conferences in the hall. Then Mr. Harvey's modulated British: "One minute please. Take 3." The music flowed around the empty seats and filled the cavernous space. Now and then a string section stood up, bringing their sound nearer the overhead microphone array.

This is the orchestra's third week of recording for London. It has not been an easy first acquaintance. No one is satisfied with the hall. Mr. Harvey says his staff has canvassed the city for suitably reverberant surroundings. Nothing better has so far been found. But in off hours, they will keep looking. Meanwhile, the tape and its willing slaves have two more days to run.

Blocked due to copyright.
See full page image or
microfilm.

Orchestra members stand as Mr. Solti asks for expressive playing.

TRIBUNE/Walter Neill