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JOE HAWTHORNE, Continued

orchestra.

"Sure, a horn player sees the orchestra as four horns surrounded by a lot of other people. On a good day, we play like a major orchestra. Unfortunately, it's not always a good day. We have to work a lot on blocking and tackling, basic execution of fundamentals," he said.

The 83-piece orchestra draws heavily on talent from the nearby Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Fewer than 10 percent of its personnel earn a living totally from music. Working with a relatively inexperienced group is satisfying but draining on the conductor's energy. "You can't take the mechanics for granted," he said.

That's where the conductor is needed the most. Hawthorne anticipated a question about the popular notion of the conductor as a white-tie-and-black-tailed figurehead who waves his hands wildly and takes the bows while the real musicians saw away below.

"People do give me strange looks when they find out what I do," he said. There are a handful of conductor-celebrities, including Bernstein, Mehta and Ozawa, who have captured the public eye and lured the mind-and-diamond crowd.

Often the great conductors are judged by how many records they put out or on their cocktail party charisma.

"In the end, it doesn't matter how it happens, as long as the music is produced well," Hawthorne said. He subscribes to no particular mechanical school of conducting. His techniques range at times from the boxy strictness of the German kappelmeister to the sweeping motions of the Romantics.

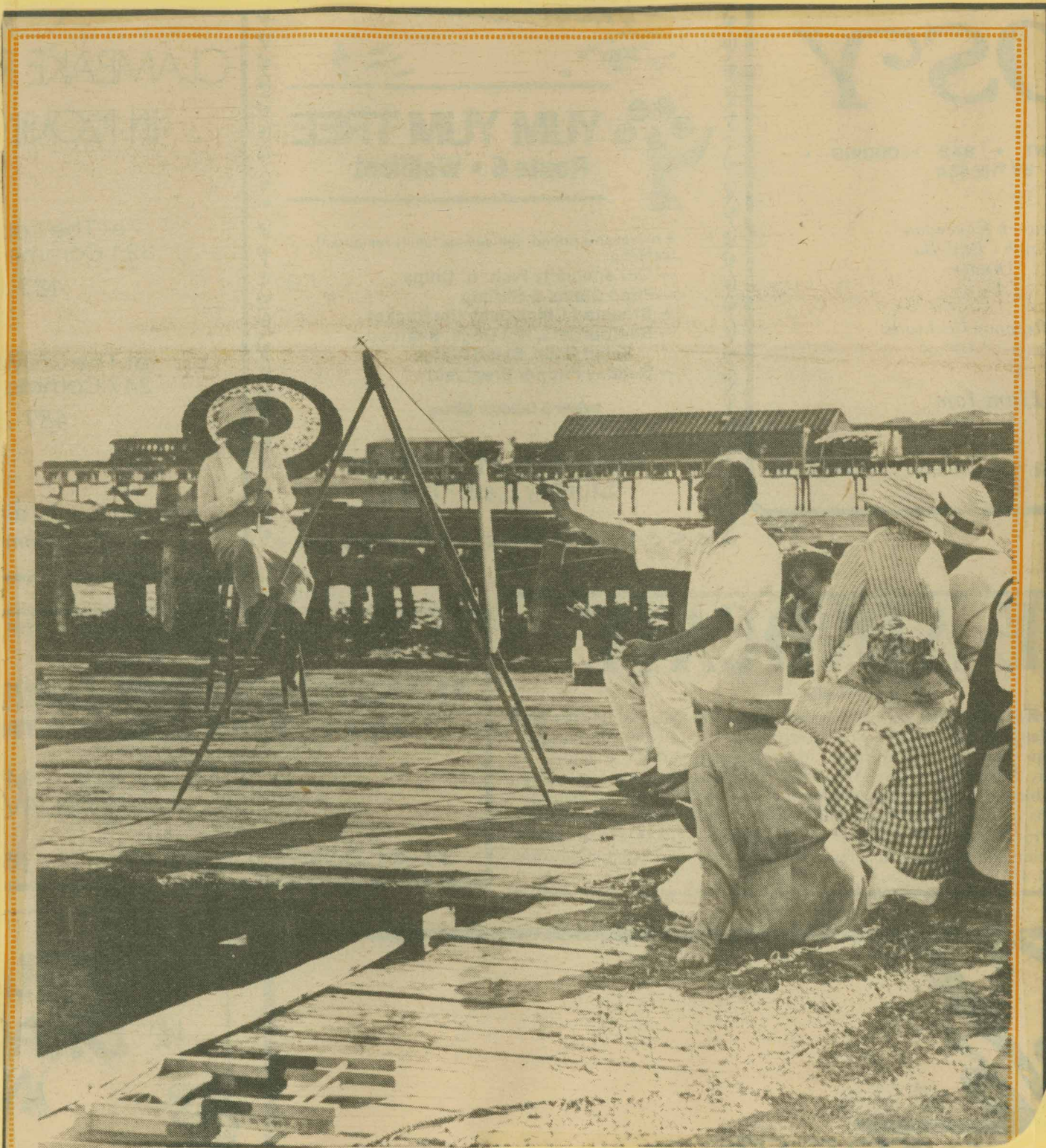
"You don't conduct Mahler the same as Mozart. You use the weapon necessary for the result you want."

An inexperienced orchestra must, for instance, be given a stronger indication of rhythm. Ideally, the conductor minimizes his indication of rhythmic beats, and expends motion on more subtle musical interpretations. The conductor hates to pistol-whip an orchestra to stay together through a piece, only to produce a technically correct but lifeless sound. "But in the beginning, there was tempo. That's where you have to begin."

As for the mink-and-diamond set, Hawthorne said there is no average concertgoer. The major orchestras in larger cities, particularly those outside the Midwest, can perform a wider range of more esoteric music, rather than program mostly for the popularly-oriented audience. But Hawthorne also performs works like "Ionisation," by Edgar Varese, solely for percussion. The closest to a melodic instrument is a siren, a gong and an innovated instrument called a lion's roar.

"Our orchestra is a repertory company; a museum sounds like it's dead. It is not a dinner theater," he said. Offering some of the more popular "orchestral favorites" is a legitimate function, he said.

The Duluth group, which ended this season with a massive performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, has just gotten a substantial \$35,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, an indication that the quality of music is equalizing across the nation. Hawthorne said the same is also true of the supposed musical gap between the United States and Europe.



Charles Hawthorne, Provincetown painter and teacher.