

Instruments, players separated by air security rules



By Mike Collett-White

Tue Aug 22, 1:26 PM ET

Musicians flying to and from Britain are being forced to put delicate and valuable instruments into aircraft holds, and one U.S. orchestra canceled its tour after new security measures were imposed.

The British Musicians' Union said Tuesday that rules introduced this month after a suspected plot to blow up aircraft between Britain and the United States could have a "devastating impact."

"Many artists, who generate significant income when working abroad, are having their livelihoods threatened by being unable to take their instruments onto an aircraft as hand luggage," said the union's assistant general secretary Horace Trubridge.

He said replacement costs for an instrument in excess of 30,000 pounds (\$57,000) were "not uncommon."

The New York-based Orchestra of St. Luke's called off its tour of Britain three days after the alleged plot was uncovered.

Other groups, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra, flew but with some difficulty.

Scott Chamberlain, spokesman for Minnesota, said around 20 musicians who would normally carry their instruments on board, including violinists and cellists, had been forced to pack them.

"There might have been some reluctance, but at the same time there was grudging acceptance," he said.

RUSSIANS FLY

Russia's Bolshoi orchestra, in Britain when new restrictions were imposed, flew home Sunday, but not before protracted negotiations between the tour's organizers and musicians.

"There were several days of quite intense negotiations with the musicians," said tour spokeswoman Faith Wilson. "The plan at one time was to truck them overland."

Orchestra members had to pack their instruments and stow them rather than take them on board as hand luggage.

"It's a problem for all visiting orchestras, whether they are coming or going into this country," Wilson said. "Some musicians have very valuable violins, for instance. I believe a condition of the insurance is they are carried by the musician."

Violin duo Marc Ramirez and Olivia Hajioff told the BBC they hoped to return to the United States from Europe Sunday.

"Our violins are extremely valuable and delicate. There is no way that we, or any other serious musician, could consider putting them in the hold. This means that we would have to return home without our instruments indefinitely."

And violinist and conductor Pinchas Zukerman told the New York Times recently that security officials had asked him to remove the strings of his rare Guarneri del Gesu violin.

"I've had unbelievable discussions at certain airports," he said, while waiting at Atlanta airport.

Copyright © 2006 Reuters Limited. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

Copyright © 2006 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.

[Questions or Comments](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Copyright/IP Policy](#) - [Ad Feedback](#)