

# The Acousticians



When fifty music critics from around the world were asked which orchestra most consistently played in tune, forty-nine of them named the Kamchatka Philharmonic. Were the musicians of a higher caliber than most? Did the conductor demand unprecedented attention to pitch control? Was there something in the water way out there on the eastern edge of the Asian continent? Nope. Instead, credit Dmitri and Ivan Dinklakevich, the orchestra's acousticians. Employing state of the art sound-enhancing equipment, the brothers constantly adjusted the sonic environment of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky Symphony Hall. A single measure in a Brahms concerto, for example, might involve sweetening the oboe line by 20 dB while subtracting a 220 Hz subharmonic from the violas. More complex compositions – such as John Cage's 4'33" – typically necessitated formant expulsion, mid-frequency distillation, undertone manipulation, and the random dispersal of infrasonic dissonances. It was grueling work, and Dmitri and Ivan often each lost pounds of perspiration during a 90-minute concert. Still, recognition of their efforts – implied though it was – was ample reward for Dmitri. And Ivan? Not so much, and one day, he ... but that's another story.