



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

For Immediate Release:

February 14, 2019

CSOA Press Contact:

[Eileen Chambers](#)

312-294-3092

**** MEDIA STATEMENT ****

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) and the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians (CFM), have a long-standing working relationship. As in any negotiation, both parties are working diligently to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. The contract between the CSOA and the CFM, which was set to expire on September 16, 2018, was extended by mutual agreement to 11:59 p.m. on March 10, 2019. The Association and Union have used the extension period to explore and discuss an alternative structure for comparable musician retirement benefits, and these conversations are continuing.

We highly value and respect the musicians of the CSO, who are among the finest in the world and have been a cultural treasure for the Chicago community for more than 128 years.

The CSOA is committed to reaching consensus on an agreement that would allow the organization to remain financially sustainable long into the future, while also generously supporting the musicians and their future.

The current contract allows for a substantial compensation package, including a comprehensive health care package and retirement benefits, as well as significant allowances for paid time off.

Consistent with the quality of their musicianship, the CSO musicians enjoy a contract that is among the best in the country. CSO musicians receive:

- The highest base salary of all U.S. orchestras other than the two major West Coast orchestras, whose musicians are paid additional compensation for living in the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, where the cost of living is much higher. (As of the 2017/18 contract year, the CSO musicians' minimum salary was \$159,016 with an average salary of more than \$185,000);
- The highest seniority pay of any U.S. orchestra starting with 10 years of service;

- The most guaranteed paid time off of any orchestra in the U.S. (12 weeks per year, with additional time off each summer), and the lowest per-week rehearsal and concert service requirements;
- More available sabbatical time than any other U.S. orchestra;
- A generous medical benefits package with low co-pays, deductibles and out of pocket maximums, and a premium contribution that covers only a small portion of the total cost of their health care.

Even though CSO musicians have one of the best contracts in the industry, the CSOA is not asking for a concessionary agreement. In spite of the fact that the CSOA has been experiencing annual operating deficits for several years, the Association has already offered an improvement in wages and working conditions, and will continue to offer a generous retirement package in our discussions.

The CSOA is committed to reaching an agreement with our musicians that is good for all involved, including the community that loves and supports the Orchestra.

We look forward to our upcoming concerts this weekend.

#