



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

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CSOA Press Contact:

[Eileen Chambers](#), 312-294-3092

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION AND CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS REACH AGREEMENT ON NEW FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT

CHICAGO— The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) and the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) reached an agreement today on a new five-year collective bargaining agreement. The musicians of the CSO, members of the Chicago Federation of Musicians (CFM), Local 10-208 of the American Federation of Musicians and the Board of the CSOA, both voted to ratify the new agreement, which is effective September 2018 through September 2023. The agreement comes after a seven-week strike and final negotiation sessions mediated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel on April 26.

The five-year agreement creates long-term stability for the organization and offers a comprehensive compensation package for the musicians of the Orchestra including improvements in working conditions, as well as a wage increase of 14% over five years, and the transition from a Defined Benefit (DB) Pension Plan to a Defined Contribution (DC) Retirement Plan.

“The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been a cultural treasure for this community for 128 years,” said Helen Zell, Chair of the CSOA’s Board of Trustees. “Our Trustees recognize and honor the exceptional artistry of the musicians. This new agreement reflects the excellence of the Orchestra and ensures that the musicians receive the outstanding compensation they deserve, while securing their and the CSOA’s long-term financial sustainability through the retirement plan transition. On behalf of the entire Board, we are proud of the teams who worked diligently to arrive at this day and we look forward to returning to concerts this week along with our Music Director Riccardo Muti and our audiences at Symphony Center.”

“The CSOA honors and values the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Together, after months of discussion, hard work and compromise by both parties, we are looking forward to a path that builds on the extraordinary artistic legacy of the CSO and will bring the finest orchestral music through transformative performances, recordings, broadcasts and educational activities to audiences for generations to come. I am pleased that we have come to an agreement on a new contract that benefits both the musicians and the CSOA,” said CSOA President Jeff Alexander.

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

HELEN ZELL
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER
President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

The terms of the newly ratified five-year agreement include:

Annual salary increases each year of 2%, 2%, 2.5%, 3.25%, 3.5% reaching an annual minimum base salary of \$181,272 in the final year of the contract. This represents a 14% increase from the base salary for the 2017/18 season.

A phased transition of the retirement benefit from a Defined Benefit (DB) to a Defined Contribution (DC) plan beginning July 1, 2020, with an annual employer contribution valued at 7.5% of the base salary plus additional payments by the CSOA into each current musician's account for the first three years of the plan based on the musician's age and years of service. All new hires as of July 1, 2020 will go directly into the DC plan.

No changes to musician's health care contribution amounts over the life of the contract, and no changes to their comprehensive insurance coverage, deductibles and co-pays.

Negotiations between the CSOA and the CSO Musicians' Negotiating Committee began in April 2018. The previous collective bargaining agreement expired, after a 6-month extension, on Sunday, March 10, 2019. A tentative agreement for a new contract was reached on Friday, April 26, 2019, after a day-long series of meetings mediated by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Throughout the contract discussions, the CSO Musicians' Negotiating Committee was represented by Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 President Terryl Lynn Jares, and legal counsel Robert E. Bloch of Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone, Auerbach & Yokich. The CSOA was represented by legal counsel Marilyn Pearson of McDermott Will & Emery LLP.

The CSOA would like to express its gratitude to the Negotiating Committee members—for the CSO: musicians Stephen Lester, Chair of the CSO Members Committee; James Smelser, Vice Chair; Cynthia Yeh; Robert Kassinger; Gina DiBello and David Sanders, and for the CSOA, President Jeff Alexander; Vice President and CFO Stacie Frank; Vice President for Orchestra and Building Operations Vanessa Moss; Director of Orchestra Personnel John Deverman; Manager of Artistic Planning Monica Wentz and Director, Financial Planning & Analysis Kerri Gravlin. The CSOA is also grateful to their actuary, Mr. Andre Latia, Senior Vice President at Segal Consulting.

The parties also extend special thanks to federal mediators Javier Ramirez, Kevin Hawkins and the FMCS, as well as Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his staff for their assistance in the final negotiating session on April 26, 2019.

CSOA 2018/19 season presentations including a Symphony Center Presents Chamber Music concert featuring violinist Itzhak Perlman and pianist Evgeny Kissin and CSO subscription concerts conducted by Music Director Riccardo Muti will resume next week with program details available for patrons now at cso.org.

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