



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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**CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION SHARES DETAILS OF
FINAL OFFER FOR MUSICIANS OF THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FOLLOWING RECENT NEGOTIATIONS**

CHICAGO — The four-week strike by the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians (CFM) will continue after the musicians voted not to accept the last, best and final offer for a new contract from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA).

The Association now faces the need to review the CSO season schedule and cancel additional concerts as needed due to the musicians' decision to continue to strike.

"Throughout these negotiations we have continued to listen to the concerns of our musicians and have directly responded with proposals that provide an exceptional, comprehensive compensation package. With the final offer on Sunday night, we have proposed a long-term agreement that would allow the parties to repair their working relationship, bring stability to the organization, support the musicians in a transition to a new retirement benefit and grow the annual base salary by 12%, retaining a contract that remains at the top of our industry," said CSOA President Jeff Alexander.

While the parties had already mutually agreed to numerous changes to the contract, they remain apart on the outstanding issues of improvements to the musicians' salary and viable alternatives to the musicians' current defined benefit pension. And, in an effort to reach resolution in these negotiations, the Association has dropped all proposals for major cost savings in the final offer.

"The Board remains committed to achieving a mutually beneficial agreement that honors our extraordinary musicians while finding a path forward for the Association that is sustainable well into the future," noted CSOA Board Chair Helen Zell.

The Association's last, best and final contract offer includes the following new or improved items from the offer presented before the contract expiration on March 10, 2019:

RICCARDO MUTI
Zell Music Director

HELEN ZELL
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER
President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

- 5-year agreement vs. a 3-year agreement;
- Annual salary increases each year of 2%, 2%, 2%, 2.5% and 3% reaching an annual minimum base pay of \$178,152 in the final year of the contract vs. the 1%, 2%, 2% reaching an annual minimum base pay of \$167,094 in the final year of the contract;
- A phased transition of the retirement plan for current members of the Orchestra. Each musician can select from two options (July 1, 2020 or July 1, 2023) for the date of their transition from the Defined Benefit (DB) pension plan to a Defined Contribution (DC) plan, depending on what best suits their individual needs. Until then, they can continue to earn benefits under the DB plan.
- Increase in the annual employer contribution for the new DC plan from 7% to 8% for all current and new musicians;
- Special, additional transition contributions for three years, based on current musicians' years of service and age. 67 musicians would receive the maximum additional contributions from the Association into their individual retirement accounts – totaling more than \$90,000 in the first three years of the transition;
- To directly address the musicians' stated desire for protection from potential shortfalls in their DC accounts, the Association added an investment protection feature to provide security of their annual benefit in retirement;

Other key components retained in the offer include:

- A “make whole payment” for those musicians whose benefits under the new retirement plan are not projected to meet or exceed the current DB benefit;
- 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. at 12 weeks per year (with additional time off each summer)
- The lowest required number of rehearsal and concert services annually;
- More available sabbatical time than any other U.S. orchestra; and
- 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. By the end of the proposed contract term, employee contributions to their medical insurance will have remained flat for 11 years.

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The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: www.cso.org and www.csosoundsandstories.org

Founded by Theodore Thomas in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the pre-eminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th music director. Yo-Yo Ma is the Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, Missy Mazzoli is Mead Composer-in-Residence and Erina Yashima is the Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice.

From baroque through contemporary music, the CSO commands a vast repertoire. Its renowned musicians annually perform more than 150 concerts, most at Symphony Center in Chicago and, each summer, at the suburban Ravinia Festival. They regularly tour nationally and internationally. Since 1892, the CSO has made 61 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

People around the globe listen to weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings on the WFMT radio network and online at cso.org/radio. Recordings by the CSO have earned 62 Grammy Awards, including two in 2011 for Muti's recording with the CSO and Chorus of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* (Muti's

first of eight releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at www.cso.org/resound.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus (Duain Wolfe, Director and Conductor) and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a training ensemble for emerging professionals. Through its prestigious Symphony Center Presents series, the CSOA presents guest artists and ensembles from a variety of genres—classical, jazz, world, and contemporary.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO offers community and education programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Through the Institute and other activities, including a free annual concert led by Muti, the CSO is committed to using the power of music to create connections and build community.

The CSO is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. The CSO's music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.