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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS AND CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION RATIFY NEW THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT

CHICAGO — The musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) — members of the Chicago Federation of Musicians (CFM), Local 10-208 of the American Federation of Musicians — and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) announce the ratification of a new three-year collective bargaining agreement, effective September 2026 through September 2029.

Under the terms of the newly ratified agreement, CSO musicians' base compensation will increase by 4% in the first two years and 4.5% in the final year of the three-year agreement. All insurance and retirement benefits will be retained, with an increase in the CSOA's contribution to each musician's defined contribution retirement account of 0.25% starting in the second year of the agreement. A number of changes to the agreement were made that improve working conditions for the musicians, enable the expansion of media activities and create efficiencies and cost reductions, including in healthcare, for the CSOA.

"The Chicago Symphony Orchestra continues to stand as a global beacon for the arts, celebrated for its extraordinary artistry," said CSOA Board Chair Mary Louise Gorno. "The Trustees applaud the incredible talent our musicians share with audiences locally

and worldwide. We are deeply grateful to the negotiation teams for collaborating to finalize this agreement — one that ensures financial sustainability while preserving our standard of artistic excellence.”

“This is a pivotal moment for the CSOA and the musicians of the CSO,” said CSOA President Jeff Alexander. “The spirit of cooperation and partnership sustained throughout these negotiations reflects the significant collaboration and mutual respect among the parties. This agreement addresses key priorities that serve not only our orchestra and organization, but also the art form and the community we proudly represent. I look forward to building on this collaboration with the Orchestra members and the Chicago Federation of Musicians as we support and advance the Orchestra’s legacy.”

“While this settlement required difficult compromises on both sides, it establishes a stable foundation that protects our musicians’ financial security and keeps live symphonic music on the Symphony Center stage,” said William Buchman, Chair of the CSO Members’ Committee. “It ensures we can maintain our legacy of exceptional artistry in a time of uncertainty. Ultimately, this contract represents a shared investment in the long-term viability of our ensemble, keeping our musicians doing the work they love.”

“The CFM honors the Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians for their distinguished artistry and unwavering dedication, and recognizes management’s commitment to preserving this vital cultural institution,” added CFM President BJ Levy.

Negotiations between the CSOA and the CSO Musicians’ Negotiating Committee began in May 2026 and continued through September 13. A tentative agreement for a new contract was reached on the evening of September 13 before the contract was set to expire at midnight. The CSO Musicians ratified the new agreement on Friday, September 18 and the Board of Trustees ratified on Saturday, September 19, 2026.

Throughout the contract discussions, the CSO Musicians’ Negotiating Committee was represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208, President BJ Levy, Vice President John Floeter and legal counsel Robert Bloch of Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone, Auerbach & Yokich LLP. The CSOA was represented by legal counsel Rachel Cowen of Dechert.

The parties would like to express their gratitude to their Negotiating Committee members — for CSO, musicians William Buchman, Assistant Principal Bassoon, Chair of the Orchestra Members’ Committee; Cynthia Yeh, Principal Percussion and Vice-Chair of the Orchestra Members’ Committee; Robert Kassinger, Bass; Ken Olsen, Assistant Principal Cello; Carol Keller, Librarian; Dan Katz, Cello and Andrew Sommer,

Bass — and for the CSOA, President Jeff Alexander, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Stacie Frank, Vice President for Orchestra and Building Operations Vanessa Moss, Director of Orchestra Personnel John Deverman, Director of Financial Planning and Analysis Kerri Gravlin, and Operations Assistant Sara Hedberg.

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