

Minnesota Orchestra: Preserving a 110-Year Legacy of Great Art



Historic image: the Orchestra in 1903.

Time is Running Out. We Need Musician Support NOW.

To our Community,

For the past 17 months, the volunteer board members of the Minnesota Orchestra have tried unceasingly to negotiate a responsible and fair contract with the Musicians' Union. The large annual deficits we have incurred to pay for a pre-recession contract (which included a 19.2 percent pay raise over five years) now threaten the Orchestra's existence.

We have done everything we can within our control. We have significantly cut staff, salaries and administrative expenses. We have developed additional sources of revenue, including renovating Orchestra Hall to create a better experience for our audiences. Even with these actions, we can't keep the Orchestra from running out of operating funds within this decade—unless the musicians cooperate.

We know that the musicians care as much as we do about the future of this great Orchestra. Now we need their support to guarantee that future. A Music Director, Carnegie Hall performances and a concert season hang in the balance. We have only days to get this done.

We need a compromise by September 15 to ensure our concert season.

We propose a compromise. Despite not ever receiving a counterproposal from the musicians, and after meeting various demands for financial transparency, this week we have shared a revised proposal in an attempt to encourage the Union to join in negotiations now.

Our compromise lifts the lockout. It pays the musicians their expired-contract salaries for two months while we work with a mediator to resolve our differences. It significantly reduces the wage cut we originally sought.

What's more, it is the only proposal under consideration that will guarantee our concertgoers a full concert season—if our musicians will agree to join us at the negotiating table now.

Our Compromise Proposal

- Returns musicians to work on September 30 at expired-contract rates for a two-month period of "play and talk" negotiations involving a mediator;
- Provides that if no agreement is reached in that time, musicians receive an average annual salary of \$102,200 for the two-year life of the contract—up from the \$89,000 average salary offered in the Board's original proposal;
- Offers an annual benefit package worth an additional \$33,000, which includes a defined benefit pension plan;
- Offers a minimum of ten weeks paid vacation;
- Offers a 33% share of excess net earned revenue with musicians if the Orchestra meets its budget;
- Eliminates more than 80% of the work rule changes in the initial proposal.

The Compromise Proposal reduces—but does not eliminate—the Orchestra's \$6 million annual deficit. We have offered it in good faith in hopes of returning musicians to the stage in time to retain our Music Director, perform at Carnegie Hall in November and launch our entire 2013-14 season.

We give our time and money because we love the Orchestra. We give financially—\$60 million in the last five years—because of an unwavering commitment to its future stability. Our primary obligation as board members is to honor this cherished institution and its supporters, ensuring that Minnesota will have an exceptional orchestra for years to come.

We will meet our musicians anywhere, anytime, to discuss a compromise. Please urge Minnesota Orchestra musicians to come to the negotiating table and accept this compromise to ensure our season—for the good of the Orchestra and our community.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Orchestra Board of Directors

**The Board Negotiating Committee will meet anytime,
anywhere, without preconditions, to discuss our offer.**

Musicians, please join us at the bargaining table.