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# Dayton sees 'last window' for orchestra labor dispute

• The governor weighed in publicly, after working behind the scenes, including pushing for George Mitchell as a mediator.

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Gov. Mark Dayton made his first public comments on the Minnesota Orchestra lockout on Thursday. Answering questions at the Star Tribune booth at the State Fair, he said he has been involved behind the scenes, most significantly in helping to select Sen. George Mitchell as a potential mediator in the labor dispute.

"I've met several times with both board members and representatives of musicians, and asked them how can I be most effective," Dayton said. "And both sides felt that it was behind-the-scenes out-of-sight, rather than a publicly prominent role," Dayton said.

The governor said he believes the two sides are in their "last window

of opportunity." The fall season in the renovated Orchestra Hall would have been starting soon, and music director Osmo Vänskä has said he will resign if the orchestra is not back in time to prepare for Carnegie Hall concerts in early November.

"I'm hoping, and this is just my own assumption, that they both want to get it solved, and they have until basically Labor Day to do so," Dayton said. "When you have this kind of dispute, both sides have to want to resolve it. No mediator can force a resolution."

## Management bought domain names

Also Thursday, a new website was launched, called Save Our Symphony Minnesota. Organizers said their intention is to end the 11-month lockout of musicians.

The group announced its site —

www.saveoursymphonymn.org — on the same day that the blog Song of the Lark reported that the Minnesota Orchestral Association had purchased 13 domain names with the words "save," "Minnesota" and "orchestra." The blog, written by Emily Hogstad, charged that the purchases were "deliberate, predatory name buying meant to outwit irritated patrons and donors."

Gwen Pappas, the orchestra's spokeswoman, said the association reserved the domain names in the spring of 2012, about six weeks after negotiations had started and it appeared they would be contentious.

"We purchased domains that we thought we might use to share messages or to protect the orchestra name, based on counsel from others who had been in similar situations," Pappas wrote in an e-mail Thursday. "On the same time line, orchestra musicians were launching their own website. What this indicates from

both sides is that we knew a tough negotiation was underway and we were seeking ways to share our messages."

John Budd, a labor expert at the Carlson School of Management, said this is the first time he's heard of this type of issue coming up.

"I imagine the rationale was more to protect the brand than stifle dissent, since a creative dissenter should be able to come up with a 14th domain name, not to mention Facebook and Twitter," Budd said. "This issue seems to reflect the bitterness of the dispute."

There was no news Thursday on what next step Mitchell, the potential mediator in the contract dispute, has planned to get both sides to negotiate.

Staff writer Rachel E. Stassen-Berger contributed to this story.

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