

**Philharmonic Rejects Musicians' Offer to Take Cuts for 2020-2021 Season;
Musicians File Charges Alleging Phil's Conduct Violates Federal Law**

On November 9, Fort Wayne Philharmonic management rejected an offer by Philharmonic Musicians to accept substantial cuts to compensation during the 2020-2021 season and return to work performing COVID-safe live and streamed concerts. The musicians' proposal would have allowed the Philharmonic to rescind its unlawful furlough of musicians and to restore world-class professional symphonic music to the Fort Wayne community. Musicians and orchestra managements in dozens of comparable orchestras throughout the US and Canada have reached similar agreements and are currently producing concerts. Departing from the general trend in the industry, the Philharmonic has now cancelled its entire 2020-2021 symphonic concert season.

Throughout the pandemic, Philharmonic management has displayed a shocking refusal to bargain in good faith with musician representatives and a persistent failure to involve musicians in critical decision-making about the future of the 76-year-old institution. For nearly two months, Phil management stonewalled musician requests to meet and discuss how to safely present concerts before announcing on July 15 its cancellation of the fall season and unpaid furloughs of musicians.

In August, the parties neared agreement on a deal that would have avoided the furloughs and allowed musicians to safely present concerts. Musicians agreed to Phil management's demands for steep pay cuts (in excess of 30%) and other concessions (including extreme flexibility in scheduling) for the Fall season, while proposing to keep the basic provisions of the parties' long-standing collective bargaining agreement ("CBA") intact. Not satisfied with these near-term concessions, Phil management insisted on gutting the CBA for the long term. Management's current CBA proposal includes a cut in the number of contract musicians from 63 to 15; permanent cuts in wages, retirement security and health care; and elimination of industry standard protections against arbitrary firings of musicians. The Phil also seeks to disband the institution's Artistic Advisory Committee and to silence musician input on Music Director and Managing Director hiring decisions. Many of these changes, contained in a September 28 bargaining proposal, have no impact on the Phil's bottom line and are not necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Management's bargaining position clearly seeks to use the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic to undermine musicians' livelihood and remove working conditions that have been negotiated over the course of decades, and will destroy the profile of one of our community's treasured institutions," says Eric Schweikert, Principal Timpanist of the Philharmonic since 1989. "In light of this, management's public declaration that they are committed to reaching an agreement that is fair to musicians rings hollow."

Musicians again were blindsided by management's November 4 announcement cancelling the remainder of the 2020-2021 season.

While musicians remain unpaid, the Philharmonic continues to pay the salaries of executive management, conducting staff, and numerous administrators. While Phil musicians remain willing to work, the organization has instead announced a series featuring touring artists entitled "Philharmonic Presents!"

The Philharmonic is in good financial health. Its current capital campaign has raised over 10 million dollars, and the value of the institution's endowment is approximately 21 million dollars, 92% of which is unrestricted funds that could be used to keep musicians employed and providing music to the community.

The Philharmonic's unlawful furlough is the subject of an unfair labor practice charge filed on October 5 and currently under investigation by Region 25 of the National Labor Relations Board. On November 10, musicians filed a second charge alleging the Phil's most recent bargaining proposal constitutes regressive bargaining in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.