



March 1, 2008

Houston Ratifies 3-Year Agreement

On October 17, 2007, the musicians of the Houston Symphony ratified a three-year agreement that began October 7, 2007 and continues through October 3, 2010. The negotiating committee hopes that this agreement has resolved and restored previous issues and concessions so they can focus on the Orchestra's future successes.

	[2006-07]	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
LENGTH OF SEASON:	[50 wks]	50 wks	51 wks	52 wks
WAGES:				
Annual Salary –	[\$70,805]	\$73,000	\$75,735	\$78,000
Weekly Salary –	[\$1,445]	\$1,460	\$1,485	\$1,500

EMG: \$75 per week

AFM-EPF: Remains at 6%.

INSURANCE:

Health – Remains at 100% for employee and 80% for dependents and partners.

[NEW] The Society has the right to seek bids for insurance coverage and/or change plans or providers, so long as any new plan meets certain specifications. The Society may also obtain a plan with lesser terms as long as the Society reimburses the Musicians any difference (including co-pays, deductibles and number of days benefits are provided) between that plan and the Medical Plan provisions at the time of negotiations.

Instrument – 100% Society-provided coverage increases from \$40,000 to \$100,000 for string instruments and harp, and \$25,000 to \$50,000 for all other instruments. The deductible increases from \$250 to \$1,000.

WORKING CONDITIONS:

- The minimum orchestra size during this agreement shall be no less than 84 permanent musicians.
- Any reduction of the agreed minimum string complement of 14, 12, 10, 9, 7 will be discussed with the Music Director and Orchestra Committee.

MISCELLANEOUS: [Note: The following electronic media and donor cultivation activities were negotiated as part of a solution to a 10-year old dispute that was resolved in the Musicians favor concerning the calculation of “Rule of 85” pensions received from the now “frozen” Houston Symphony Society plan, including retroactive payments.]

- **ELECTRONIC MEDIA:** The following activities will be allowed during the term of this agreement:
 1. Permission to rebroadcast the previous season’s radio tapes to augment the number of weeks of local-NPR broadcast.
 2. Permission to make one audio recording per year from old radio tapes for fund-aising purposes (they may not be used for live broadcast or for commercial use.)
 3. Permission to make one audio recording per year of classical repertoire only from old radio tapes for fundraising purposes (they may not be used for live broadcast or for commercial use.)
 4. At the Society’s option, one of the 10 local TV broadcasts allowed each season may be withheld from broadcast and made into a DVD. The DVD will be for fundraising purposes such as new or increased contributions and will labeled “not for commercial use or live broadcast”.
 5. Audio-visual recordings of Education and Family Concerts created during the life of this agreement may be made available through local cable access channels or closed circuit directly to any school district or educational institution within the jurisdiction of Local 655.
- **DONOR CULTIVATION SERVICES:** Musicians or small ensembles agree to donate up to 15 services per contract year for donor cultivation events.

Thanks to the negotiating team: Jeff Robinson, Chair; Jeff Butler, Rita Porfiris, John Thorne and special thanks to veteran committee member Phil Stanton for his institutional memory and conviction to seek restitution of pension disputes.

The negotiation team wishes to thank Attorney Mel Schwarzwald, Local 655 President Lovie Smith-Schenk and Secretary-Treasurer Bob McGrew for all their work in making this settlement happen – their help was crucial in helping to resolve the long-standing pension dispute.

Thanks also to SSD Electronic Media Director Debbie Newmark for her help at all hours of the day and night.

This bulletin was prepared by ICSOM Secretary, Laura Ross with the assistance of the Houston Symphony ICSOM Delegate, Eric Arbiter.

HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA