



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
SYMPHONY AND OPERA MUSICIANS

SETTLEMENT BULLETIN

October 18, 2009

Honolulu Ratifies Modified Agreement

On August 29, 2009, under unprecedented pressure from the Honolulu Symphony board, the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony ratified an agreement which re-opened the second year of the current agreement set to expire on June 30, 2011. This change reduces the 2009-10 season from 34 to 29 weeks to achieve a 15% pay cut. All other terms of the agreement remain in force for the 2010-11 season.

When the 2008-09 season ended on May 10, HSO musicians were owed 15 weeks of back pay – more than 44% of each full-time musician’s annual salary. This was even worse than the 2007-08 season when musicians and staff were owed over 11 weeks of back pay. By the end of May, two difficult seasons had taken a tremendous financial, emotional and physical toll, and a significant number of musicians had decided not to return for the 2009-10 season. More were leaving or contemplating leaving as every week went by.

Musician and union leadership met with board and community leaders in the spring and summer to share a consistent message: musicians must receive back pay or there would be no orchestra when the 2009-10 season begins in September, and if there was no season, it would signal the demise of the Honolulu Symphony. In response, a key state legislator strongly encouraged the Honolulu Symphony Foundation (a separate entity which manages the HSO’s endowment) to use the State’s funds to collateralize a \$1.8 million advance to the HSO in order to pay musician and staff back wages because most of the funds in the HSO’s endowment had been granted by the State.

Unfortunately, after the monies were made available, the Foundation put conditions on its release. They divided the money into three sections that would be released when the HSO devised an action plan, hired a new executive director (the previous executive director had left in June) and adopted a “realistic” budget for the 2009-10 season, which put particular pressure on the musicians because the Foundation made it clear that a “realistic” budget included sizable pay concessions rather than the 5% salary increase mandated in the current agreement.

Understanding that musicians would only receive payment for work already completed if they agreed to cuts in the upcoming season, HSO musicians immediately engaged in “budgeting meetings” with Symphony board and Foundation leadership. One idea discussed (and rejected) established salaries based on a sliding scale that was contingent upon the success (or not) of the HSO’s fundraising campaign. Musicians eventually agreed to cut their salary for the 2009-10 season by reducing the season by five weeks and preserving the 5% weekly wage increase in the existing agreement. The musicians also agreed to drop outstanding grievances for interest or penalties on late payments during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 seasons.

All outstanding wages were paid on September 4, 2009 for the remaining 11 weeks of the 2008-09 season. As of September 17, 2009, 16 musicians, nearly one-fifth of the orchestra, have either resigned or taken leave for the 2009-10 season that began September 13. All staff and conductors have had to accept 15% pay cuts.

HSO musicians remain concerned that, although the revised budget calls for a 36% increase in fundraising over 2008-09 levels, the make-up of the HSO board remains almost unchanged from the previous season.

	[2008-09]	2009-10	2010-11
LENGTH OF SEASON:	[34 weeks]	29 weeks	34 weeks
WAGES:			
Annual Salary –	[\$34,500]	\$30,897.76	\$38,805.56
Weekly Salary –	[\$1,014.71]	\$1,065.44	\$1,102.74/\$1,179.94 <i>17 wks./17 wks.</i>
VACATION:	[2 weeks]	-0-	2 weeks

HONOLULU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Agreement contingent upon musicians receipt of all back pay by September 4, 2009.
- Union agrees to withdraw all grievances regarding late payment of wages for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 seasons.
- Any contracted musicians must be granted a leave of absence if the request is received by September 30, 2009.

Thanks to the negotiating team: James Moffitt and Stephen Dinion, Co-Chairs; Scott Anderson, J. Scott Janusch, Geoff Stone, Ken Hafner, Marsha Schweitzer, Laurilyn Butin, Jason Byerlotzer, Nikki Routman, Jonathan Parrish and Steve Flanter. Thanks also to Local #677 President Brien Matson and Attorney Leonard Leibowitz.

This bulletin was prepared by ICSOM Secretary, Laura Ross with the assistance of the Honolulu Symphony ICSOM Delegate, Steve Flanter.