



### Houston Symphony Ratifies 2-Year Agreement

On July 15, 2005, the musicians of the Houston Symphony ratified a two-year agreement following a request by the Houston Symphony management to re-open the current contract that was to have run through the 2005-06 season. The new contract freezes wages for the first season at 2004-05 rates, with a 2% raise in the second year. [The 2005-06 season would have included an increase of \$50 per week and a return to 1 furlough week.] The committee was able to achieve some work rule and condition gains within these negotiations. The negotiations were respectful and efficient as opposed to previous negotiations. The new contract will allow the Houston Symphony to achieve a balanced budget for the 2005-06 season, which is anticipated to help in fundraising initiatives.

	<b>[2004-05]</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>
<b>LENGTH OF SEASON:</b>	[49 wks + 3 furlough wks]	49 wks + 3 furlough wks	49 wks + 3 furlough wks
<b>WAGES: Annual Salary –</b>	[\$73,010]	\$73,010	\$74,480
<b>Weekly Salary –</b>	[\$1,490]	\$1,490	\$1,520
<b>SENIORITY:</b>	[\$1/wk for each year of service]	\$1/wk for each year of service	\$1.50/wk for each year of service

Seniority will be paid at 5-year intervals on the anniversary of hire date.

**EMG:** The above salary includes \$75 per week that may be applied to Electronic Media.

**VACATION:** 9 weeks.

**PENSION:** AFM-EPF increases to 6% from 5.5% starting in 2005-2006.

Both parties agree to assemble a committee by October 1, 2005, to examine outstanding concerns over the Symphony’s pension plans.

**ORCHESTRA SIZE:** Minimum orchestra size will be 84 musicians (was 97, with the stipulation that during the 2003-2006 contract, the Symphony Society was allowed to leave vacant up to 10 positions) but minimum string complement is 14.12.10.9.7.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:**

- Twenty-five (25) Mondays shall be free during the Winter sessions each year.
- There will be 20 periods of 2 consecutive days off during the Winter session.

### HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

- Temperature of stage will be monitored at the beginning and at intermission of every service and appropriate penalties will be paid as needed.
- There will be a 20-minute intermission for all two and a half hour rehearsals.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Future contract negotiations will begin 9 months prior to the expiration of an existing agreement.
- One of the two personal days outlined in the contract shall be at the discretion of the musician, with a few stipulations as to substitute hiring.
- Accountability:
  - In the event the annual total budgeted ticket revenue goals are exceeded in any year for the duration of this agreement, 40% of the excess revenue will be paid to tenured and probationary musicians as a lump-sum payment in a form to be determined by the musicians. 40% will be allocated according to management discretion to be used in part as a staff incentive, and the final 20% will be used for debt reduction. Any payments will be made within 90 days of the close of each fiscal year.
  - An effort shall be made to resume the efforts of the Mayor's Symphony Advisory Committee (which consists of musicians, community and Society representatives to oversee/advise/discuss progress of orchestra maintenance) by September 15, 2005.
  - Musicians will have the option to conduct an audit by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) hired by the musicians annually, and all costs related to this audit will be borne by the musicians. All financial information will be made available to the accountant. The accountant will prepare reports for the orchestra respecting all confidentiality issues associated with individual salaries, guest artist salaries, and individual donors. The CPA will provide the Society with a copy of any and all reports prepared for the musicians. All related costs to this audit will be borne by the musicians.

The orchestra would like to thank Negotiating Committee members Jeff Robinson, (Chair); Jeff Butler, Rita Porfiris, Roger Kaza and Philip Stanton. Thanks also to Local 65-699 President Lovie Smith-Schenk, to consultant Keith Okano, and to attorney Susan Martin.

*This bulletin was prepared by ICSOM Secretary, Laura Ross with the assistance of the Houston Symphony ICSOM Delegate, John Thorne.*

**HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**