

Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra

A 110-year Legacy of Artistic Excellence

Reality Check – Answers to Your Questions

What counter proposals have the Musicians made?

In the past 18 months, the Musicians have made 10 proposals, including multiple concessionary financial offers, in an effort to reach a fair and reasonable resolution. An additional proposal put forth by the board's chosen mediator was accepted by the Musicians. The board and management rejected the independent mediator's proposal and every other proposal they have been offered.

Through many meetings held between the two sides, meetings with the governor and other politicians, conversations through back channels and with board members, the Musicians have made exhaustive efforts to find common ground. From day one, it has always been our position that we would compromise, but we would not agree to a contract and plan that would reduce the Minnesota Orchestra to a third-rate ensemble.

Why did the Musicians reject the MOA's final offer?

The final management proposal, unanimously turned down by the Musicians, contained "poison pills" that virtually guaranteed its rejection.

- A **regressive pay structure**, completely foreign within our industry, included pay reductions increasing in each of the three years of the offer. This downward spiral would end with a 25% pay cut, with even more cuts promised in ensuing years. By 2016, the Minnesota Orchestra would offer a base salary of \$84,016, lowering the rank of the orchestra from a top-ten to a mid-tier orchestra. By comparison, base salaries in contracts of top-ten orchestras in smaller cities such as Cleveland reach \$124,955 by 2015, and Pittsburgh, \$107,224 by 2014.
- This reduced salary, when combined with a reduced orchestra size and an additional 25% pay cut for substitute musicians, would result in a 40% overall reduction of the product – the orchestra itself. This **drastic reduction of quality** would further result in negative outcomes to the bottom line and the loss of the ability to attract and retain the finest musicians. Common sense tells us that there would be less enthusiasm and support from the public for a mediocre product.
- Musicians have been forced by the lockout to accept work in other cities in order to support their families. Under their final offer, any musician with commitments to other orchestras after October 15th, 2013, would be subject to termination and ineligible for the signing bonus offered.
- **Numerous contract changes** remained in place in the offer that would directly impact the excellence of the Minnesota Orchestra in major ways: a shift in artistic decision-making from artists to a management that has shown little restraint in overreaching the powers it already has, and changes to the musician job description that make it vastly inferior to that of other top orchestras with which we compete for artistic talent.

Instead of discussing and clarifying these and many other issues, management released their final offer through the media and asked that we vote on it. Accepting this offer would have saved our jobs, but not the orchestra we have all known. Rather than negotiate with us as Maestro Vänskä's deadline loomed, the management and board negotiating team rejected the Musicians' subsequent concessionary proposal. Their team walked away from the table and within five minutes cancelled the Carnegie Hall series, assuring Osmo's resignation.

What do the Musicians want?

The Musicians want a first-class orchestra for our first-class community. We want the board and management to join us in embracing that vision. We want to be part of an organization where board, administration, and artists work together toward a common goal: maintaining a world-class, world-renowned orchestra to serve the most important constituent—our community.

There is a way out of this disaster that relies on growth, not destruction. It requires learning from successful models around the country and leadership that cares deeply about the orchestra on all levels, not just the bottom line. With a fresh start, both sides can come to understand each other's perspectives and move forward with a shared vision. Together, we have accomplished great things. Together, we can do so again.

We are the Musicians and we thank you for listening.

For more information and to learn how you can help visit:

www.minnesotaorchestramusicians.org