

PRESS RELEASE



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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA RATIFIES MUSICIANS' CONTRACT EXTENSION THROUGH 2022

Two-year extension is accompanied by a COVID-19 side letter outlining compensation and work rule changes that apply during the pandemic

The Minnesota Orchestral Association and its musicians have approved an extension of the musicians' collective bargaining agreement to run through August 31, 2022. The two-year extension is accompanied by a COVID-19 side letter (an amendment to the contract) that outlines work rules and musician compensation reductions that apply during the pandemic. The agreement was separately ratified by both the Board of Directors and the musicians, who are members of the Twin Cities Musicians' Union (Local 30-73).

"Our staff and musician negotiators have come up with a common-sense approach to these negotiations that acknowledges the uncertain time period we are living through," said Board Chair Margaret Bracken. "The COVID-19 agreement reflects both the challenges of the pandemic and the collaborative spirit and goodwill that exists within the organization to address these issues for the long-term health and vitality of the Orchestra."

The terms of the COVID-19 side letter call for:

- A 25% reduction in musician compensation, in response to COVID-19-related loss of earned revenue;
- Medical and dental benefits to remain unchanged from the current contract;
- Expanded sick leave;
- Modified duties to be made available for musicians who opt not to perform onstage at Orchestra Hall during the pandemic.

A series of safety measures jointly agreed to by Orchestra administration and the Minnesota Orchestra Musicians' Committee are in place to support musicians, staff and stage crew as they return to work at Orchestra Hall for a series of fall 2020 concerts designed for TV, radio and livestreaming. The concerts will initially feature ensembles of up to 25 musicians and will be presented without an in-person audience.

Music Director Osmo Vänskä—who leads the Orchestra in its Season Premiere on October 2, as well as a program on December 4—has committed to taking a 35% salary reduction.

Timothy Zavadil, Musicians' Negotiating Committee Chair, said, "Musicians recognize that this is a very difficult time for the organization due to the pandemic. This two-year agreement will provide the flexibility we need to keep the organization healthy for the long term. While we cannot perform for our audience in person, we are happy that we can do so through livestreams, radio broadcasts, and our new television partnership with TPT. We remain grateful to our Board for their ongoing support, as well as the management and staff, who are working tirelessly to plan this fall season."

Said President and CEO Michelle Miller Burns, "This negotiated agreement gives us both stability and flexibility over the next two years, which is critical to sustaining the organization in an unpredictable environment. We also appreciate the openness musicians demonstrated in coming to an arrangement that gives us the ability to widely engage with audiences across TV, radio and streaming platforms during the pandemic. We share a mutual vision of connecting with audiences and sustaining the Orchestra, despite the difficulty posed by COVID-19, and this agreement reflects that vision."

The COVID-19 side letter goes into effect on October 1 and runs through August 31, 2021, at which point the letter expires if the Orchestra is able to resume performing concerts with a full complement of musicians and without limitations around audience capacity. If both conditions are met, the contract reverts to the terms of the FY20 Collective Bargaining Agreement. If the conditions are not met, the side letter extends for an additional year through August 31, 2022. The side letter also offers the flexibility to make contract adjustments at any point if particular criteria—either an inability to hold any concerts or a return to concerts with a full complement of musicians and no regulation around audience size—are met.

President of the Twin Cities Musicians Union Brad Eggen commended the musicians and the Orchestra management: "We are fortunate in Minnesota to have an internationally-recognized Orchestra dedicated to the artistic and spiritual health of our community. In this time of extreme challenges, this group crafted a solution that preserves inspiring performance in a creative agreement respectful of the musicians' careers and the well-being of all involved."