

For Immediate Release

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FORT WORTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA STRIKE ENDS: MANAGEMENT AND MUSICIANS AGREE TO NEW CONTRACT

Miguel Harth-Bedoya to Conduct New Year's Eve Concert

FORT WORTH, TX – On December 3, 2016, the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Association (the Association) and the American Federation of Musicians, Local 72-147 representing the musicians of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (the Musicians) agreed upon terms of a new four-year contract.

Today, the Musicians of the FWSO ratified the agreement, ending the work stoppage which began on September 8, 2016. This agreement was reached after two days of federal mediation and more than a year of good faith bargaining. The new contract runs through July 31, 2020.

Bridging the gap which existed between the proposals of the Association and the Musicians, an anonymous donor stepped forward on Thursday of last week with a gift of \$700,000 which led to a breakthrough in negotiations. This generous gift provided the Association the necessary financial relief to offer Musicians a two-year pay freeze followed by two years of small increases.

“It has been the collective goal of the management and the Board of Directors of the Fort Worth Symphony to financially stabilize the organization to secure the Orchestra’s short-term survival and long-term health,” said Amy Adkins, President and CEO. “This agreement addresses this goal while enabling the Orchestra to return to its mission of enriching this community and state with the beauty and power of symphonic music.”

“This generous donation,” Adkins continued, “provides the necessary stability for the next several years as we continue to implement plans to increase both earned and contributed revenue, including the ever-important growth of our endowment fund. We are also grateful to the musicians for their shared sacrifice by accepting wage freezes as we work together to find a new path forward for this great orchestra.”

Agreeing that the new contract represents a hopeful new beginning, the Musicians are also pleased to see their goals and aspirations for the orchestra addressed. “We have believed all along that our community had the strength and desire to move the orchestra forward with growth, not cuts,” said Musicians Union President Stewart Williams. “Our faith has been confirmed by this wonderful gift which exemplifies the spirit of a thriving city which loves its musicians.”

Under the terms of this four-year agreement that will run through July 31, 2020, musician wages will remain at their current levels for years one and two. In year three, musicians will receive a weekly pay increase of 2%, followed by 2.5% in year four. Vacation will be reduced from 35 to 28 days to enable the Association to secure additional revenue-generating opportunities. The musicians first paid week back will begin on December 26.

“We are incredibly moved by the generosity which has made this agreement possible,” said Dan Sigale, FWSO Violist and Chairman of the Musicians’ Negotiating Committee. “We also thank all our supporters who have stood by us during these past several months. We look forward to returning to our regular performances and sharing great music with our great city.”

The anonymous contribution substantially reduces the FWSO’s annual projected shortfall for the next few seasons. The remainder of the solution relies upon increased fundraising and audience development efforts.

“All of us who serve on the Board of Directors are greatly pleased that these negotiations have reached a positive resolution so that our musicians can return to the stage,” said Chairman of the Board Mercedes Bass. “We deeply appreciate the patience and generosity of our patrons and supporters during this difficult chapter. Now it is time for our community to join together to secure the future of this brilliant orchestra.”

The FWSO's first performance following the work stoppage will take place on New Year's Eve in a concert conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya at Bass Performance Hall.

"I'm thrilled the strike is resolved," said FWSO Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya. "I can't think of a more fitting way to celebrate the New Year than with the return of the Orchestra and its wonderful musicians. I will be proud to conduct its return concert on New Year's Eve. I would like to take this opportunity to say to our community: This orchestra belongs to all of us; it raises our quality of life, it impacts our economy directly and indirectly. I'd like to ask the people of Fort Worth to help the orchestra come back not only strong, but stronger than ever."

The remainder of the FWSO season remains as previously scheduled. For tickets for the New Year’s Eve concert or other future performances, patrons may visit www.fwsymphony.org or contact the box office at 817-665-6000.

About the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra

Since 1912, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra has educated, entertained and enhanced the cultural life of Cowtown. The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra performs a broad range of symphonic and pops concerts from August through May. In addition to its own concert series, the Orchestra also collaborates with the Texas Ballet Theater, Fort Worth Opera, Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Southwestern Seminary Master Chorale, and the Children’s Education Program of Bass Performance Hall. Concerts In The Garden, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra’s summer music festival, was launched in 1990 and takes place each June - July at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

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