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The AFM Strongly Condemns Management's Suspension of DSO Season

American Federation of Musicians (AFM) President Ray Hair has condemned the decision of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) management to suspend the remaining four months of the 2010-2011 season, following musician rejection of the latest DSO contract proposal. "I am deeply disappointed that management has escalated the scale of this strike by cancelling the remainder of the concert season rather than offering a fair bargain that our talented members would accept," says Hair. "Musicians throughout the world have shown unprecedented support toward DSO musicians and the AFM is proud of the Orchestra's resolve to overwhelmingly reject an unjust agreement."

Although Senator Carl Levin and Quicken Loans owner Dan Gilbert had stepped in last week to help broker an agreement, DSO management did not show up at face-to-face meetings with the arbitrators until the third and final day. Then, management waited until Levin and Gilbert had left the meeting to make significant changes to the proposals the two had worked on.

In the end, the musicians' negotiating committee recommended rejection of management's latest offer, which included a large increase in employee healthcare deductibles, required employees to cover travel costs for assignments up to 75 miles away, and significantly reduced the DSO commitment to community outreach, among other unreasonable concessions.

"Musicians and artists across the country and across the world are disheartened at the actions of the executive committee of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra," commented Bruce Ridge, International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians chair. In explaining the impact of the suspension on the city of Detroit he added: "the management and board of the DSO, stewards of one of the communities greatest and most viable assets, have broken their trust with the citizens of Detroit."

To show your support, or to obtain more information, visit www.detroitssymphony.com.

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