

NEWS MEMO

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

MUSICIANS' UNION, DALLAS OPERA STILL FAR FROM SETTLEMENT TODAY'S MEDIATION SESSION CRUCIAL FOR ORCHESTRA, OPERA COMPANY NOVEMBER 10 SEASON OPENER COULD STALL WITHOUT ORCHESTRA CONTRACT

- WHO:** The Union representing musicians of the Dallas Opera Orchestra - the Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians Association, affiliated Local 72-147 of the American Federation of Musicians, which represents more than 1700 professional musicians across North Texas and Southern Oklahoma, representatives of The Dallas Opera, and Commissioner Dave Renfro of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.
- WHAT:** Commissioner Renfro will host the Union and opera company negotiating teams for another day of talks aimed at settling outstanding issues in the current round of contract negotiations between the musicians' union and the opera company
- WHERE:** Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Office located at 8600 Freeport Parkway, Suite 330, in Irving, just east of DFW Airport.
- WHEN** 1pm, Monday, November 6, 2006
- WHY:** The Union and the opera company have bargained since May of this year but have been unable to agree on a settlement to replace a contract reached in 2001 after the orchestra went on strike. The opera company is demanding a 5-year contract that will cut the size of the orchestra from 57 to 48 musicians and force layoffs for 15 weeks between shows in 2009 during the opening season of the new Winspear Opera House. The orchestra's annual work guarantee was \$14,861 per musician last season. Musicians have been asked to accept \$15,000 in 2009/2010, over a 34-week season - amounting to \$441 per week - a 50% pay reduction. The opera company insists that orchestra job cuts and effective salary reductions in Winspear, the main room of the new **\$275 million Dallas Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA)**, are dictated by DCPA's business plan to make more money in the Opera House from touring Broadway shows, which cost less to produce than opera. CRITICS HAVE PRAISED THE DALLAS OPERA ORCHESTRA AS AMONG THE VERY BEST OF US OPERA ORCHESTRAS. Musicians say the cuts will harm the orchestra both economically and artistically. *The musicians' union has proposed a 3-year settlement with cost of living wage increases each year and has indicated its willingness to compromise over proposed layoff weeks in 2009/10 when Winspear opens.* If no agreement is reached today, the union will convene an orchestra meeting tomorrow evening to consider the company's final offer, with a vote up or down on Thursday. *Although the orchestra is rehearsing Verdi's Nabucco for a Friday season opener, a Thursday vote to reject regressive company demands may result in a strike.*

*Details in backgrounder available at www.musiciansdfw.org
For further information, contact Local 72-147 President Ray Hair
at (Metro) 817-469-6040 or 817-988-5238 (voice mail/pager).*

Release #3, November 6, 2006 10:00 am