

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**  
**Concerning Contract Dispute with The Dallas Opera**

**Dallas-Fort Worth Professional Musicians Assoc**

Local 72-147, American Federation of Musicians

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*Ray Hair, President*

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**The Dallas Opera**

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*Karen Stone, General Director*

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**Dallas Center for the Performing Arts**

2106 Boll Street

Dallas, Texas 75204

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*Bill Lively, President and CEO*

<http://www.dallasperformingarts.org>

- The Musicians' Union has contracted with The Dallas Opera for the services of its orchestra since 1989.
- The Dallas Opera Orchestra currently serves as the pit orchestra for the company's season of 16 continuous weeks at Fair Park Music Hall that also includes services for the Texas Ballet Theatre's annual *Nutcracker*.
- Critics have praised the Dallas Opera Orchestra as among the best of U.S. opera orchestras.
- Negotiations began in May toward a new agreement to replace the expired contract reached after the orchestra struck the opera company in October 2001.
- As an inducement to end the 2001 strike, the opera company promised that the orchestra would benefit significantly in 2009 after the opening of the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, the main room in the \$275 million Dallas Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA), which will serve as the location for main stage productions of both the opera and ballet companies.
- Musicians currently earn a minimum seasonal salary for an opera season of 16 continuous weeks work.
- The union has proposed a 3-year extension of the expired contract with cost of living wage and fringe improvements.
- The opera company is demanding a 5-year contract containing a one year freeze of the Orchestra musicians' minimum annual salary, now \$14,861,
- In anticipation of the opening of the Winspear Opera House, the company wants wholesale changes to the existing agreement leaving many musicians worse off than in the 2005/06 season, including conversion to per-service pay instead of weekly salary, and layoffs without pay for numerous weeks every season.
- The company wants to cut the orchestra from 57 to 48 members, harming it artistically and economically.

- The company wants unpaid layoffs of 15 weeks between shows in 2009/2010 - the inaugural season in Winspear Opera House, and wants the orchestra to accept a minimum guarantee of \$15,000 for the entire 34 week season, – amounting to an effective weekly salary of \$441 – a 50% pay reduction.
- The Union has indicated its willingness to compromise on the issue of proposed layoff weeks.
- Annual salaries of DCPA President and CEO Bill Lively (\$260,000), opera company Music Director Graeme Jenkins (\$250,000) and General Director Karen Stone (\$200,000) are poised to soar over the next few years as the final phase of the campaign to build and open Winspear Opera House intensifies.
- The opera company says the regressive actions toward the orchestra are necessary to fit the business plan of business partner DCPA, which will operate and manage the Winspear Opera House.
- DCPA and the opera company are planning just 6 operas in Winspear in 2009/10, filling most remaining weeks with touring Broadway musicals.
- The opera company says that DCPA needs the big money that can be made from out-of town touring Broadway shows because they are cheaper to produce than opera productions.
- The Dallas Opera has a \$50 million direct stake in the Center, including Bill and Margot Winspear's \$42 million gift for their namesake opera house, a gift made to DCPA through the Dallas Opera Foundation.
- Patrons paid \$5000 or more to attend an October 25 DCPA Opera House fundraising gala featuring Julie Andrews and Sir Elton John.
- The opera company hopes to open its 50<sup>th</sup> season with performances of Verdi's *Nabucco* on November 10.

**For further information, contact Local 72-147 President Ray Hair at  
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