



March 6, 2019

Dear Friend of the Orchestra,

As musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, we want to thank you for your years of generosity and support. That support has helped the CSO become one of the great cultural institutions of Chicago and one of the finest orchestras in the world.

As Maestro Muti and others point out, the CSO maintains its position in the nation and the world because of its musicians, who are drawn from across the globe – as are our patrons. Today, however, after nearly a year of contract negotiations, the actions of the CSO Association management, led by Board of Trustees Chair, Helen Zell, and CSO President, Jeff Alexander, threaten the continued ability to attract the best talent as well as the future of the Orchestra itself.

Although revenues from ticket sales and your generous donations have increased every year since our last contract, management is trying to reduce our basic benefit package, including ending our guaranteed retirement benefits - demands which would harm members and present a danger to the future of the Orchestra itself.

Chicago has already fallen behind the basic compensation packages offered by the orchestras of Los Angeles and San Francisco – both augmented by housing assistance allowances – and may soon fall behind Boston. Yet all this has occurred while revenues are at an all-time high and payment to the musicians represents little more than one-third of the CSO's revenues.

Musicians from around the world have always sought a place in the Orchestra, attracted by the assembled talent and the knowledge that their efforts and skills would be respected and valued by the Board of Trustees. For most of the last half-century Chicago prided itself on having the most highly-compensated orchestra in the nation. Management demands threaten the ability to attract and retain the finest musicians.

A great city, Chicago deserves a great orchestra: your support will ensure its future.

Please contact Board of Trustees\_Chair Helen Zell at [rahnk@cso.org](mailto:rahnk@cso.org) or President Jeff Alexander at [AlexanderJ@cso.org](mailto:AlexanderJ@cso.org). They can also be reached at 312-294-3210.

Sincerely,

Gina DiBello (Violin), Rob Kassinger (Bass), Steve Lester (Bass), David Sanders (Cello), Jim Smelser (Horn),  
Cynthia Yeh (Percussion)

For the Musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

For more information visit [ChicagoSymphonyMusicians.com](http://ChicagoSymphonyMusicians.com), [facebook.com/csomusicians](https://facebook.com/csomusicians) or write us at [musiciansofthecso@gmail.com](mailto:musiciansofthecso@gmail.com)