



# SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS • MUSIC DIRECTOR

**Press contact:**

Oliver Theil

Director of Communications

San Francisco Symphony

Tel. 415.503.5426 / 415.264.1241

[otheil@sfsymphony.org](mailto:otheil@sfsymphony.org)

[www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CONCERT SCHEDULED for 2:00 PM MARCH 14 CANCELLED DUE TO WORK STOPPAGE BY MUSICIANS**

**SAN FRANCISCO, March 13, 2013** – Due to a work stoppage by the musicians of the San Francisco Symphony (SFS), the concert scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 14 has been cancelled and will not be rescheduled. Patrons can obtain up-to-the-minute information on concerts, ticket exchanges and customer service by calling the Symphony Box Office at (415) 864-6000 and on the Orchestra's website at [www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press).

The Musicians Union of San Francisco, Local 6, American Federation of Musicians, representing musicians of the San Francisco Symphony, have rejected proposals from the Orchestra administration for a new three-year contract that would have kept the musicians among the three highest paid orchestras in the country. The administration notified the musicians that a revised proposal would be presented Thursday, March 14 but the musicians decided to strike rather than continue negotiations overseen by a federal mediator.

The latest administration proposal offered a minimum base yearly salary of \$141,700 in the first year, with multi-year increases to \$144,560 by the end of the proposed contract. During the most recent four-year contract, the musicians' base minimum pay increased by 17.3%, an average of 4.3% per year. In addition to the minimum base salary, other musician compensation such as radio payments, over-scale, and seniority raises the current annual average pay for SFS musicians to over \$165,000.

The administration's most recent offer also maintained all current benefit payment levels including 10 weeks paid vacation, a maximum pension of \$74,000 annually upon retirement, paid sick leave, and a full coverage health plan with no monthly contribution for individual musicians.

“We are disappointed that the musicians have chosen to strike and deeply regret any inconvenience to our patrons,” said Brent Assink, Executive Director of the San Francisco Symphony. “We will continue to work hard to develop a fair agreement that gives our talented musicians a contract that reflects our stature as one of the top orchestras in the country but also one that sets a prudent financial course for the future.”

Providing affordable health care options for musicians remains a key goal. With the rising cost of health care, SFS administration proposed health care plan changes but still offered a health care plan option with no monthly contribution for individual musicians. The latest proposal also maintained a maximum \$74,000 annual pension for retiring musicians, with a slight increase in retirement age to draw full pensions.

In the current economic environment, the San Francisco Symphony is facing the same challenges that other major American orchestras around the country are facing. For all four years of its most recent collective bargaining agreement with its musicians, operating expenses have outpaced operating income. While concert and related revenues have increased 2.4% compounded annually during the term of the four-year agreement, concert production expenses have increased 8.1% compounded annually. The Orchestra has incurred an operating deficit in each of those years.

“Many of America’s top orchestras are facing similar challenges with increased concert production, pension, and health care costs currently outpacing revenue growth. We are developing a multi-year plan to achieve a balanced operating model, including identifying and growing new sources of revenue and at the same time reducing the growth rate of expenses,” said Assink.

As a non-profit organization, the Symphony provides transparency about its finances in fully audited and publicly available documents in accordance with the law. The administration responded to all of the union’s specific requests for information in a timely manner throughout the negotiations. Since September, this has included over 50 formal requests for which were delivered over 500 pages of documentation.

Patrons with tickets to the March 14 concert may exchange them for an upcoming concert, may donate their tickets, or receive a refund. Patrons can obtain up-to-the-minute information on concerts, ticket exchanges and customer service by calling the Symphony Box Office at (415) 864-6000 and on the Orchestra’s website at [www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press).

For more details on the negotiations please visit [www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press) or contact Oliver Theil, SFS Director of Communications at (415) 264-1241 [otheil@sfsymphony.org](mailto:otheil@sfsymphony.org)