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AFM Places Louisville Orchestra on Unfair List

The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) has placed the Louisville Orchestra on its “Unfair List,” following the orchestra’s emergence from Chapter 11 bankruptcy without a collective bargaining agreement. At an August 15 court hearing, Judge David Stosberg approved the orchestra’s reorganization plan, effectively bringing it out of bankruptcy. The AFM had opposed the plan, citing the fact that it is not viable without employed musicians.

Louisville Orchestra musicians had rejected management’s last contract offer, which was presented as an ultimatum. The offer would have employed some musicians for 30 weeks per year, while employing others for only 10 or 20 weeks per year. Since proposing the tiered arrangement, management has been unwilling to negotiate.

Following the August 15 hearing, Louisville Orchestra Executive Director Robert Birman stated that the orchestra would work toward a contract with its current musicians, who are AFM members, but that it may also pursue agreements with non-AFM musicians.

“The Louisville Orchestra’s management is mistaken to believe that a pick-up ensemble would be a satisfactory replacement for the world-class symphony orchestra that patrons have come to expect in Louisville,” says AFM President Ray Hair. “The AFM will continue to fight on behalf of its members to keep the orchestra intact and to secure a fair contract.”

AFM members who render musical services for employers placed on the “Unfair List” are subject to penalty under AFM bylaws.

ABOUT THE AFM

Founded in 1896, the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada (AFM), AFL-CIO, is the largest organization in the world dedicated to representing the interests of professional musicians. With more than 90,000 members, the AFM represents all types of professional musicians, including those who record music for sound recordings, film scores, videogames, radio, television and commercial announcements, as well as perform music of every genre in every sort of venue from small jazz clubs to symphony orchestra halls to major stadiums. Whether negotiating fair agreements, protecting ownership of recorded music, securing benefits such as health care and pension, or lobbying legislators, the AFM is committed to raising industry standards and placing the professional musician in the foreground of the cultural landscape.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.afm.org.

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