

David Roth
General Director

DEADLINE TO SEAT PLAYERS FOR THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO PASSES.

Circumstances beyond the control of Kentucky Opera (“KO”) have required it to use two pianos and a harpsichord rather than an orchestra for the November 18th & 20th performances of *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* (FIGARO). Though both sides in the negotiations between the Louisville Orchestra (“LO”) and its players publicly stated last week that an agreement seemed closer than ever, a resolution to the ongoing labor dispute has yet to be found and KO’s deadline to seat an orchestra for this weekend’s performances has now passed.

KO General Director David Roth says, “We were holding out hope the LO and its players would come to an agreement last weekend, resolving their dispute and enabling us to seat an orchestra for FIGARO. To ensure the integrity of our production, we can no longer wait and must proceed with the best alternative now available to us for instrumental music. KO will nevertheless be able to present a memorable and enjoyable experience for our audiences.”

KO is confident the performances will be spectacular, offering the Ultimate Opera Experience while maintaining KO’s commitment to artistic excellence and fiscal responsibility. The intimacy of the Brown Theatre lends itself to Mozart’s salon style comedy. KO has assembled exceptional artists from across the nation, a stage director who has fashioned a truly theatrical reading of Mozart’s classic comedy. With her vision, KO has designed and built a beautiful new set to kick off KO’s four-year Mozart Cycle.

On October 3, KO had offered to contract musicians for FIGARO from the local union (AFM Local 11-637) under the union’s own published fee per-service rate for opera and ballet, as opposed to the weekly salary rate the players received from the LO. The weekly salary agreement for *CARMEN* cost KO over \$33,000 more than what a per-service agreement would have cost. A fee per-service rate for union players is standard practice in the opera industry.

The offer made by KO was rejected by the union and its players, fearing a negative impact on their ongoing negotiations with the LO. They wanted KO to agree once again (as it did for its production of *CARMEN* earlier this season) to be bound by the terms and compensation that were applicable under the union’s expired collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”) with the Louisville Orchestra. But KO was not a party to the expired CBA and neither negotiated nor signed it. Despite the union’s arguments to the contrary, KO is a legal entity separate from and independent of the Louisville Orchestra. KO has a separate board of directors, separate budget and separate sources of funding. KO therefore has no legal or ethical obligation to abide by the terms of the union’s expired agreement with the Louisville Orchestra.

On October 22nd, KO was notified that the national office in New York City of the American Federation of Musicians (“AFM”) was placing KO on the union’s “Unfair List” at the behest of the LO Musicians Committee. This inexplicable and unfair action subjects any union musician who works for KO to fines and other disciplinary measures and effectively prevented KO from hiring other musicians in time to play for KO’s production of FIGARO.

“KO has no desire”, Mr. Roth says, “to intervene in the ongoing dispute between the LO and its players. But we will not be held hostage by that dispute and we will not be prevented from putting on a high-quality production of FIGARO this weekend”. Roth continues, “We have nearly sold out both performances, but I want to encourage all of our ticket buyers to show their support by coming to the opera this weekend. I guarantee anyone who attends *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* will not be disappointed. Attendees who are not satisfied, please contact us via email at info@kyopera.org.”