



KENTUCKY OPERA
PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

MUSICIANS' UNION REFUSES TO ACCEPT OFFER FROM KENTUCKY OPERA.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY – (October 10, 2011) In preparation for Kentucky Opera's upcoming November 18 & 20 production of THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO, General Director David Roth contacted Joe Spain, President of the Local 11-637 American Federation of Musicians (Local 11-637) on October 3rd, to offer to contract union musicians for the opera and pay them at per-service rates as published by Local 11-637 for opera and ballet performances. As of Monday, October 10, Local 11-637 continues to reject this offer.

In a response received last week, Mr. Spain stated, "We have received your letter of October 3, in regard to hiring our Union musicians for the KO production of "The Marriage of Figaro". We have been in touch with AFM President Ray Hair, and he has reaffirmed the basic provisions in his previous communication regarding the hiring of musicians for "Carmen"." But Mr. Hair's previous communication would restrict KO to an industry standard established for symphonic orchestras with scores of performances and services each season. It is not at all affordable for an opera company the size of KO with only three opera productions and seven public performances. Mr. Hair, the national union president in New York City, has directed Local 11-637 to refrain from reaching any agreement with Kentucky Opera unless it provides compensation and employee benefits commensurate with those of the expired agreement the musicians had with the Louisville Orchestra (LO), an agreement which KO neither negotiated nor signed.

KO made this same request for its September performances of the opera CARMEN immediately after the Louisville Orchestra (LO) canceled all orchestra concerts during September and October. At that time Mr. Hair prohibited Local 11-637 from signing an opera industry standard, per-service contract with KO for CARMEN. Without sufficient time to put together an orchestra, KO was forced to negotiate with the local union as if KO were a symphonic orchestra, which has no basis in the opera industry for Level III companies (annual budgets between \$1mil to \$3mil in expenses). KO's annual operating budget is approximately \$2 mil.

Per the Local 11-637's own standard for opera services, KO overpaid the musicians for CARMEN by more than \$33,500. With little time to pursue other options, KO was forced to agree to pay for musicians based on the expired collective bargaining agreement between the LO and its musicians employees. Under the standard contract with the LO, KO would have paid \$58,348 for all orchestral services required for CARMEN. But under the best agreement KO was able to reach in September with Local 11-637, KO paid \$91,895, which was \$33,547 more for the same services. KO maintains that this arrangement is not reasonable or sustainable.

Kentucky Opera's General Director David Roth states, "Once again, Kentucky Opera and its patrons are caught in the crossfire of a protracted and intractable labor dispute that places an unfair and unsustainable financial burden on our opera company. The agreement we were forced to reach with the

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union to seat an orchestra for CARMEN was not affordable for an opera company the size of Kentucky Opera. We are not a symphonic orchestra and we will not be forced to negotiate as if we were. Kentucky Opera will not be held hostage over the labor dispute between the Louisville Orchestra musicians and their employer. If union musicians want to work for Kentucky Opera then the offer remains to pay them at the rate their union has published for opera services. Unfortunately, they have chosen to disregard this offer.”

Because time was not sufficient to pursue other music options for CARMEN, KO entered into an unfortunate and costly one-time arrangement with Local 11-637 that cannot be repeated. With THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO, KO has again reached out to the union but is holding firm to its request for an agreement based on the union’s own published rates for opera services. Because the union continues to refuse this offer, KO will unfortunately be forced to pursue other options to provide music for THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO.

Details of each opera production:

For CARMEN, KO’s contract with the LO would have cost \$58,340. KO’s arrangement with Local 11-637 actually cost KO \$91,895. CARMEN had a total of 9 services (6 rehearsals/3 performances) with 51 musicians contracted (only 46 actually performed in the pit, 38 of whom were LO musicians, 8 were non-LO musicians and 5 were considered standbys who did not play but were paid nonetheless). The rates paid were based on the weekly salary the LO musicians would have been paid under their expired collective bargaining agreement with the LO.

For THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO, the KO contract with the LO would have cost \$50,243 for a total of 7 services (5 rehearsals/ 2 performances) and per Mozart’s orchestration it would require only 38 musicians. The Union’s standard contract for opera and ballet would give \$136 per three-hour service with additional payment to principals and assistant principals, supplemental payment for the contractor and a 6% AFM pension contribution. This is the offer that KO gave to the union which was not accepted.



The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, supports Kentucky Opera with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Entering its 59th season of production, Kentucky Opera was founded in 1952 and designated the State Opera of Kentucky in 1982. The mission of Kentucky Opera is to entertain and educate a broad, diverse audience by producing opera of the highest quality.

The Brown-Forman 2011/12 Kentucky Opera Season

CARMEN September 23, 25 & 30, 2011

ENEMIES: A LOVE STORY October 4, 2011

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO November 18 & 20, 2011

THE MERRY WIDOW February 17 & 19, 2012

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