

The Players Association of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra is deeply saddened and frustrated by the Board of Directors' unilateral decision to suspend operations for the remainder of the 2009-2010 season. This action directly violates our contract with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) and constitutes an illegal lockout.

The CSOA's critical cash flow situation, while exacerbated by the poor economy, can be directly traced to its insufficient fundraising apparatus. The orchestra has operated for multiple seasons without any professional development staff. While the population of Charleston has continued to grow, the CSOA failed to effectively expand its donor base, forcing them to go back to only a handful of generous supporters time after time. This has predictably led to donor fatigue. These weaknesses were clearly outlined by outside consultants engaged by the CSOA, yet none of their central recommendations have been put into effect. Instead, the board still believes that expenses are the main problem and that cutting both musicians and musician compensation is the solution.

The musicians have attempted to provide solutions to current and past problems. In the seasons of 2003-05, 2008, and the present, we made substantial wage concessions in order to help the CSOA achieve financial stability. Every time we agreed to cuts, we were told that this would be a signal to the community that the CSO is committed to solving its problems, and individuals and corporations would have a greater willingness to make donations. Unfortunately, this never proved to be the case. Clearly, another round of concessions by the musicians will not fix the existing problems, just as they have not in the past.

We believe that the CSO can still have a bright future. Next season is supposed to be our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season, and will commence the arrival of guest conductors who will be potential candidates for Music Director as David Stahl will be concluding his prolific tenure. We also look forward to the Dock Street Theatre reopening, as well as the upcoming renovation of the Gaillard Auditorium. With the beginning of an economic turnaround already underway, and the arrival of prominent companies, such as Boeing and Celebrity Cruises, we feel that the future is fertile ground not only for the survival of the CSO, but also for significant growth and prosperity.