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The Cleveland Orchestra  
Colorado Symphony Orchestra  
Columbus Symphony Orchestra  
Dallas Symphony Orchestra  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra  
The Florida Orchestra  
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra  
Grand Rapids Symphony  
Grant Park Orchestra  
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra  
Houston Symphony  
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra  
Jacksonville Symphony  
Kansas City Symphony  
Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Louisville Orchestra  
Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Nashville Symphony  
National Symphony Orchestra  
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra  
New York City Ballet Orchestra  
New York City Opera Orchestra  
New York Philharmonic  
North Carolina Symphony  
Oregon Symphony Orchestra  
The Philadelphia Orchestra  
Phoenix Symphony  
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra  
Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico  
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra  
Saint Louis Symphony  
The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra  
San Antonio Symphony  
San Diego Symphony Orchestra  
San Francisco Ballet Orchestra  
San Francisco Opera Orchestra  
San Francisco Symphony  
Symphoria  
Utah Symphony  
Virginia Symphony Orchestra

January 14, 2021

There is no question that the Metropolitan Opera, in its nearly 140 years of existence, has set the world standard for operatic excellence and innovation. What CEO Peter Gelb is attempting—using the pandemic as surreptitious cover to cut wages, erode working conditions, and eviscerate union contracts—is reprehensible.

While the Met musicians and singers have been thrown to the curb for the past 10 months, the vast majority of our AFM orchestras, ballet companies, and opera associations—both in the US and Canada—have worked together to find compromise solutions to the terrible financial challenges the pandemic has set our industry. Considerable sacrifices have been made by both employees and managements across the country, but in nearly every orchestra we have found a path to maintain our musicians and to preserve our ties to the community and our audiences.

Not so the Met. Gelb has chosen this terrible moment in history to abandon the musicians and the Met's mission: "...to present the highest quality performance of the opera repertory featuring the world's most talented artists..." Instead he is pursuing his long-standing agenda to demolish hard-won union contracts with utter disregard for the artistic consequences to the Met or to the lives and livelihoods of its employees.

The Met has proven itself a leader in online content through its Met: Live in HD programs. They clearly have access to greater expertise, equipment, and experience in this area than nearly any other arts institutions across the world. Why not use it? Other orchestras and opera companies, with much less experience in digital content, have found ways to present programming that benefits the institution and its artists. Using strict COVID protocols, other orchestras are presenting new virtual programming to their loyal patrons.

In abandoning his own musicians and hiring non-Met musicians for virtual fundraising events, Gelb is abandoning his responsibility to his employees and deceiving the patrons and donors who believe they are supporting the continuing artistry of the Metropolitan Opera. It is hard to view these fundraisers as anything more than propaganda, intended to promote the image of preserving this great institution, all while leaving stranded the very artists who ARE the Met. It is not Peter Gelb who makes

the Met great. It is the vocalists who bring our favorite characters to life, the stage crew who literally do all the heavy lifting, and the musicians who transform the printed page into a sublime musical experience. These people are the very heart of the institution, they are the life of the art, and they create the legendary reputation of the Met through each performance. To allow these hardworking artists to suffer, to circumvent and abandon them, is not only immoral but risks destroying the very essence of that which makes the Met great.

Our industry will only find its way through this perilous crisis by working together—management and employees—side by side. It is past time for Peter Gelb to come to the table in good faith and find the solutions that will preserve Metropolitan Opera AND its artists. There is too much at stake to delay.

–The Governing Board

*The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra is a charter member of ICSOM, which is a Player Conference within the American Federation of Musicians (AFM)*