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CANTON SYMPHONY MUSICIANS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE STRIKE **Musicians are working without a contract and ask for respect and transparency.**

[CANTON, OH] The Musicians of the Canton Symphony Orchestra (Canton, OH), members of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 111 have overwhelmingly authorized a strike. The authorization allows the Union to declare a strike should it deem necessary, although the musicians' Orchestra Committee will continue to negotiate with the Canton Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), using the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The musicians seek wages that mitigate record inflation since 2021, as well as basic job security and working conditions aligned with most professional orchestras in the country. The CSOA has rebuffed industry-standard proposals for mileage, minimum guarantees, and proposals correcting long-standing issues of respect and musician participation in the organization's future, while refusing to share its audited financial statements.

Benjamin Reidhead, a member of the CSO's Orchestra Committee and horn section, said, "We have taken the step of getting a strike authorization from our membership because the lack of movement from the CSOA on these issues jeopardizes our ability to maintain the quality of the orchestra. We don't understand the resistance to updating our working conditions to those enjoyed by modern American orchestras nor the CSOA's current refusal to offer a bare-bones cost-of-living wage increase."

Gerhardt Zimmerman, the CSO's late Music Director, wrote his final public statement to the CSO musicians: "Throughout the past half-century, it has been an absolute privilege and honor to stand before this exceptional group of musicians as your conductor. Together, we have created unforgettable experiences for ourselves and our audiences. The dedication, talent, and passion that each of you brings to our performances have made the Canton Symphony Orchestra a beacon of excellence in the world of classical music.... Your dedication, talent, and commitment have made the Canton Symphony Orchestra an artistic force to be reckoned with, and I have the utmost faith in your ability to carry that torch forward."

The musicians of the CSO draw inspiration from these words and will continue to dedicate themselves to the preservation and growth of Canton's "beacon of excellence" and call on the Board and Management to do the same.