

YANNICK NÉZET ————— SÉGUIN

March 18, 2021

To: Peter Gelb and the Met Management Negotiating Committee; Brad Gemeinhardt and the Met Orchestra Negotiating Committee; Ned Hanlon and the Met AGMA Negotiating Committee

Cc: Executive Committee, The Metropolitan Opera Board of Directors

Dear colleagues,

As Music Director of The Metropolitan Opera, a position which I am honored to hold, I write about the ongoing situation at our beloved institution during this past year. The arts world has been hugely affected by the pandemic, but the way it has affected the Met and the members of this company is especially dramatic. Of course, I understand this is a complex situation, but as the public face of the Met on a musical level, I am finding it increasingly hard to justify what has happened. As such, I must state my position clearly:

As the months went by, it became increasingly unacceptable how long the members of the orchestra and chorus have had to endure one full year without pay, and how this has created enormous tension and resentment within the Met and towards the Met. We risk losing talent permanently. The orchestra and chorus are our Crown Jewels, and they must be protected. Their talent *is* the Met. The artists of the Met *are* the institution.

Please remember that my journey into the heart of the Met was through my work with the orchestra and chorus - it is humbling to work with these world-class musicians. Protecting the long-term future of the Met is inextricably linked with retaining these musicians, and with respecting their livelihoods, their income and their wellbeing. This must be a priority for the leadership of this institution.

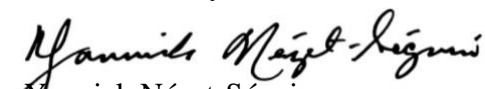
Over the past year I have had numerous conversations with management about the need to support our chorus and orchestra members as well as our music staff. I have had conversations with the orchestra and chorus committees about their concerns, and have done all I can as a non-bargaining colleague to find common ground. I am relieved that the chorus is now receiving partial compensation and has been negotiating for some weeks, and that the orchestra has agreed to start negotiations this week and will today begin receiving much needed bridge pay. Thankfully, this means that these artists will earn a proportion of their usual earnings for some time to come — but this is just a start.

I implore the fiduciaries of this incredible house to urgently help to find a solution to compensate our artists appropriately. We all realize the challenges, economic and otherwise, that the Met is facing, and therefore I ask for empathy, honesty, and open communication throughout this process. All will be necessary for this institution to move forward, and to preserve the talent of the Met.

I would like to thank the Board for your many years of generosity and stewardship of the Met - but now, we need you more than ever. You, our most loyal supporters, can provide the necessary sustenance to get us through this crisis.

Protecting the future of the Met means protecting and nurturing its world-class talent. We are at a unique moment to find our way forward, beyond the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,


Yannick Nézet-Séguin