

## CONCLUSIONS (Oslo - 26 February 2014)



## INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

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### I. MUSIC AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

All orchestras around the world should support the global initiative "Music against child labour" by dedicating one of their concerts – including those already scheduled – until December 2014 to this campaign. They should also keep FIM and ILO-IPEC informed of their plans or decisions in this respect, so that this information can be used to encourage others to join in.

### II. MODERN ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

#### 1. Future of symphony orchestras: new concepts, new working practices

- a. Symphony orchestras have the potential to perform the entire repertoire, while providing full employment.
- b. They often have to face unfair competition from ensembles that exploit the precarious nature of freelance work.
- c. Casual engagements in ephemeral ensembles cannot be imposed on musicians without damaging their livelihoods and having a negative impact on the sustainability of permanent orchestras.

#### 2. Decision making in orchestras: top-down or bottom-up?

- a. Without dialogue between musicians and orchestra management, there can be no achievement of progressive and artistic aims.
- b. Mutual displays of confidence between musicians and management are no substitute for a formal, structured social dialogue in the orchestra.
- c. The involvement of musicians in decision-making should be made a formal, permanent procedure and not be exclusively left to the possible goodwill of the music directors or the administration.

#### 3. Orchestras in crisis: is there a political solution?

- a. The crisis that a number of orchestras are facing has mainly to do with a lack of political will to invest in them at a sustainable level.
- b. With the alleged objective of reducing deficits, many governments have decided to drop or cut funding to orchestras. By doing so, they ignore the orchestras' significant contribution to the local and national economy.

### III. HEALTH AND WELFARE

#### 4. Ageing and performance: access to training and adapted workload

- a. A significant number of players can face psychological and physical impairments that adversely affect their ability to perform before they reach retirement age or can afford to retire.

- b. Co-operation between musicians and orchestra management is a key to a successful approach of age related issues.

- c. Fair, balanced, regular career review can help identify age related issues before they become career threatening.

- d. Systems should be introduced, including appropriate retirement planning, in order to allow musicians, if they wish, to reduce their workloads as they age.

#### 5. Organisation of the workload to avoid excessive strain and stress

- a. Trade unions and managers should work together towards the setting-up of adequate rules on working time organisation.
- b. Orchestra rehearsals and performances should be organised so as to avoid work overload, as well as to allow personal practice and work-life balance.
- c. The impact of repertoire in terms of physical stress or exposure to noise should be taken into account in programming at both individual concert level and throughout the season.
- d. Conductors' contracts should include specific provisions aimed at implementing risk prevention policies.
- e. Tripartite dialogue at the ILO is an important step towards the recognition of musicians' professional ailments.

### IV. THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

#### 6. Re-auditions: wrong tool

- a. Correct and proper orchestra management should be enough of an incentive to allow musicians to fully dedicate themselves to their job.
- b. Musicians are the best placed to understand how performance standard issues occur and what it takes to solve them.
- c. Re-auditions are a stressful and unnecessary way to assess the quality of musicians.
- d. We the musicians strongly affirm the principle that re-auditions should be banned.

#### 7. Labour conflicts and industrial action

- a. Questionable austerity policies often interfere with the fundamental principle that cultural institutions should be driven by artistic vision. Labour conflict may become inevitable when other forms of action are exhausted.
- b. Engagement with the audience can generate positive feedback, which demonstrates how much the service delivered by orchestras is valued by the general public.



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## 3<sup>rd</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORCHESTRA CONFERENCE

- c. In order to fully engage politicians and the media, which are a key to success, appropriate methods of messaging (including social media) are of crucial importance..
- d. Disruption of the audience should be kept to a minimum so as to keep it on the musicians' side in times of industrial unrest.
- e. Orchestras are under attack in many countries – the closing down, in 2013, of the ERT in Athens is indeed a most disgraceful example that impoverishes the whole of Greek society. International solidarity is more necessary than ever to support colleagues who face such critical situations.
- f. Only a high level of organising can create sufficient leverage to make industrial action successful.

### 8. Balance between protection of jobs and raising levels of pay

- a. Unions need to fight for both jobs and adequate levels of pay.
- b. As managers demand more flexibility in order to better adapt to market opportunities, increased pressure makes the profession of musician more demanding, both physically and psychologically.
- c. Moreover, where orchestras have been downsized following budgetary cuts, musicians are generally expected to continue to deliver at the same level, thus facing burnouts and health issues at an unprecedented rate, with an eventual impact on artistic quality.
- d. Musicians' unions must therefore use all available tactics in order to safeguard jobs.