

Resolution N°. 4

July 29, 2026

Subject: *Support for the Chicago Sinfonietta and its Musicians and Mission*

Chicago Sinfonietta Resolution

Whereas, The Chicago Sinfonietta was founded in 1987 by Maestro Paul Freeman with a pioneering mission to advance equity in classical music by creating professional opportunities for musicians, composers, and conductors from historically underrepresented communities while expanding access to orchestral music for diverse audiences; and

Whereas, For nearly four decades, the Chicago Sinfonietta has demonstrated that artistic excellence and diversity are complementary values, serving as a national model for inclusive programming, innovative artistic collaboration, educational outreach, and the cultivation of future generations of musicians through initiatives such as the Freeman Fellowship; and

Whereas, The approximately sixty professional musicians of the Chicago Sinfonietta, represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians, have dedicated themselves to fulfilling this mission while providing performances and educational programs that have enriched the cultural life of Chicago and inspired audiences throughout the region; and

Whereas, Chicago Sinfonietta has announced that, following the conclusion of its 2025-2026 season, it will suspend artistic and educational programming until 2027, lay off nearly its entire administrative staff, and undertake a “strategic renewal period” intended to stabilize the organization’s finances and develop a more sustainable operating model; and

Whereas, The suspension of operations has left many professional musicians facing the sudden loss of significant employment and uncertainty regarding their future engagement with the orchestra following the expiration of their collective bargaining agreement; and

Whereas, Numerous musicians expressed that the announcement came as an unexpected shock and that they were not afforded an opportunity to work collaboratively with management to explore potential alternatives that might have preserved employment while addressing the organization's financial challenges; and

Whereas, The loss of employment opportunities at the Chicago Sinfonietta disproportionately impacts musicians from historically underrepresented communities and interrupts an organization whose mission has been to broaden representation on the concert stage, expand educational opportunities, and elevate the works of diverse composers, thereby affecting not only its musicians but also the audiences, students, and communities it has faithfully served; and

Whereas, The Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") recognizes that professional orchestra musicians are indispensable artistic, educational, and cultural assets whose livelihoods deserve meaningful protection during periods of organizational hardship, and further recognizes the importance of transparency, communication, and collaboration between management, boards of directors, and musicians when responding to financial crises; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") expresses its unwavering solidarity with the musicians of the Chicago Sinfonietta and with the Chicago Federation of Musicians during this period of uncertainty and economic hardship; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA recognizes and celebrates the extraordinary artistic, educational, and social contributions made by the Chicago Sinfonietta over nearly forty years, and affirms that its mission of advancing equity, expanding opportunity, and serving historically underserved communities represents an important model for the orchestral field; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA encourages the Chicago Sinfonietta's leadership, Board of Directors, and all stakeholders to engage transparently and collaboratively with the orchestra's musicians and their union throughout the organization's strategic renewal, recognizing that the musicians are essential partners in preserving both the institution's artistic excellence and its founding mission; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA supports efforts to restore the Chicago Sinfonietta to long-term financial sustainability while preserving professional employment opportunities for its musicians and maintaining its historic commitment to artistic excellence, equity, education, and community engagement; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA encourages orchestras, labor organizations, philanthropic leaders, public officials, and supporters of the arts to recognize the vital cultural importance of the Chicago Sinfonietta and to support efforts that will allow the organization to successfully relaunch its artistic and educational programming and continue serving the people of Chicago for generations to come.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board