

Resolution N°. 8

July 29, 2026

Subject: *Support for Arts Workers at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts*

Kennedy Center Arts Workers Resolution

Whereas, The Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") is committed to advancing the interests of professional orchestra musicians and standing in solidarity with workers throughout the performing arts industry; and

Whereas, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts ("Kennedy Center") has served as one of the nation's premier performing arts institutions for more than five decades, employing thousands of union musicians, stagehands, technicians, artisans, administrative professionals, and other arts workers represented by numerous labor organizations, including the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada ("AFM"), the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees ("IATSE"), the American Guild of Musical Artists ("AGMA"), Actors' Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists ("SAG-AFTRA"), UNITE HERE, and others; and

Whereas, The Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra is one of the nation's only professional orchestras dedicated to performing opera, ballet, and musical theater, and its musicians have devoted decades of training, professional excellence, and public service to advancing the performing arts for audiences across the United States; and

Whereas, The National Symphony Orchestra, an artistic affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 1986, is one of the nation's premier orchestras, serving millions of people through approximately 150 annual performances, nationally televised broadcasts, music education initiatives, community engagement programs, commissions of new American works, and international tours that showcase the artistic excellence of American orchestral musicians; and

Whereas, The current Administration has taken steps to undermine the historical and cultural significance of the Kennedy Center by attempting to change its name, propose unnecessary renovations, and modify the type of programming it presents, leading a number of prominent classical artists to cancel or withdraw their planned appearances at the Kennedy Center; and

Whereas, The cancellation or withdrawal of productions, performances, and artistic engagements, coupled with reduced programming and declining audience attendance, has substantially disrupted the livelihoods of Kennedy Center musicians, stagehands, ticketing personnel, production crews, and countless other arts workers by reducing employment opportunities, eliminating income, and creating significant professional and financial uncertainty; and

Whereas, The planned temporary closure of the Kennedy Center for renovation has further disrupted employment, and concerns have been raised regarding the implementation of layoffs, reductions in force, and the elimination of union positions prior to the closure; and

Whereas, IATSE has filed unfair labor practice charges alleging that the Kennedy Center failed to fulfill its legal obligation to bargain over the effects of layoffs and the elimination of bargaining unit positions before terminating employees, and these matters remain subject to ongoing legal proceedings; and

Whereas, A federal court has ruled that aspects of the Kennedy Center's planned closure process failed to satisfy required legal obligations, reinforcing concerns expressed by affected workers regarding transparency, due process, and the impact of management decisions on employees and artistic programming; and

Whereas, Kennedy Center employees have also sought to exercise their federally protected rights to organize and bargain collectively in pursuit of transparent employment practices, fair working conditions, professional independence, and a meaningful voice in decisions affecting their workplace; and

Whereas, Professional musicians and arts workers dedicate decades of education, training, auditions, and artistic development to earn positions with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, and other ensembles that perform at the Kennedy Center, and the stability of those careers is essential not only to the workers themselves, but also to the cultural and economic vitality of our communities and our nation; and

Whereas, ROPA recognizes that the strength of the labor movement depends upon solidarity among unions and support for workers whose livelihoods, collective bargaining rights, and professional dignity are threatened; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Regional Orchestra Players' Association ("ROPA") expresses its unwavering solidarity with the musicians, stagehands, technicians, administrative professionals, and all arts workers whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by reduced programming, canceled performances, layoffs, or other employment disruptions at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts ("Kennedy Center"); and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA affirms its support for the rights of all Kennedy Center workers to organize, bargain collectively, and receive the full protections afforded under applicable collective bargaining agreements and federal labor law; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA calls upon Kennedy Center management to engage in good-faith bargaining with all affected unions, to respect existing collective bargaining agreements, and to work collaboratively with employee representatives to protect good union jobs throughout the renovation period and beyond; and be it further

Resolved, That ROPA encourages continued public support for live performances at the Kennedy Center whenever possible, recognizing that attendance at performances directly supports the livelihoods of the many union musicians and arts workers whose labor brings these productions to life.

Submitted by: The ROPA Executive Board