

LIFE

DSO resumes rehearsal; vote on contract continues

By MARK STRYKER
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On the one hand, it looked and sounded like any other Detroit Symphony Orchestra rehearsal. On the other hand, it was anything but.

The DSO musicians returned to the Orchestra Hall stage Thursday morning for their first rehearsal since reaching a tentative contract agreement Sunday to end an epic six-month strike. With music director Leonard Slatkin on the podium, the orchestra started the session with the optimistic strains of Dvorak's "New World Symphony."

"I'm very glad to be back," said bassist Larry Hutchinson, as he walked toward the stage door before rehearsal. "I can't wait to kiss the stage."

Hutchinson also sounded a philosophical note: "If we learned anything, it's that for our cultural institutions, whether it's us or the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) or the opera, it's either use it or lose it. We can't take these wonderful institutions for granted or we'll lose them."

Though the formal ratification vote on the new contract, which began Thursday, won't finish until sometime today, the musicians decided earlier this week that they would return to work for rehearsals Thursday in preparation for week-end concerts. The contract, endorsed by the musicians' negotiating committee, is

expected to be approved.

All the tickets for the free patron appreciation concerts Saturday and Sunday were quickly snapped up this week. Donors, subscribers and ticket holders who were shut out can claim vouchers for next week's concerts by contacting the DSO box office. DSO officials expect to announce the schedule for the rest of the spring either today or Monday, followed soon by plans for next season.

Sunday's concert will air live on WRCJ-FM (90.9) at 3 p.m. and also will be streamed online at wrcjfm.org. The performance will be televised at 7:30 p.m. Sunday on WTVS-TV (Channel 56).

The broadcasts are a direct result of provisions in the new contract that loosen the rules for disseminating the DSO through various electronic media. Under old rules, the combined costs of the three Sunday broadcasts would have been more than \$50,000, said DSO vice president Paul Hogle. With the tentative deal, in which a built-in portion of the musicians' salary is earmarked for national and local electronic media, the additional cost for broadcasts will be zero.

"Our ambition is to be the most accessible orchestra on the planet," Hogle said.

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