

# Union Musicians Reach First Agreement with Skylight Opera Theatre

## Vote on Tentative Contract Scheduled for February 5, 2005

MILWAUKEE, WI - (January 26, 2005) In a demonstration of commitment to artistic excellence, for the first time the Skylight Opera Theatre and American Federation of Musicians Local 8 will have a collective bargaining agreement for Skylight musicians, pending ratification. A tentative agreement between Skylight Opera Theatre and American Federation of Musicians Local 8 was reached January 20, and Skylight musicians will vote on its expected approval at a meeting February 5, 2005.

The agreement that will go into effect upon ratification designates 25 musicians as non-probationary, gives them improved job security, increases wages for all of Skylight's orchestra musicians, and formalizes the professional relationship between the musicians and Skylight. The agreement provides an 11% wage increase effective January 1, 2005 and a 26% increase over the life of the agreement, which expires June 30, 2008. The Skylight employs between one and 20 musicians for about 80 performances each year.

"This agreement enables Skylight and musicians to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to artistic excellence with the assurance to our audience and fellow performers that the music they hear is of the finest quality," said Rich Tremarello, Skylight Musicians negotiating committee chair. "Skylight also agreed not to use recorded music or other devices to replace the orchestra."

Christopher Libby, Skylight Managing Director, said, "We are pleased to have an agreement with the American Federation of Musicians Local 8. We believe the agreement includes many of the gains that the musicians were seeking and allows the Skylight and musicians to maintain the musical standards our patrons have come to expect. Skylight Opera Theatre is committed to providing live music to our patrons, and this collective bargaining agreement demonstrates that our musicians share this commitment."

"We understand that the instrumentation required for a given production or season can vary. The new contract provides Skylight the flexibility to hire exactly as many musicians as management deems necessary. The contract also provides for consultation with musicians regarding substitute lists, filling vacancies or making additions to the roster. In addition, the musicians will have a grievance and arbitration process to settle any disputes that arise," said David Lussier, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 8, who assisted in negotiations.