



OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD OF THE ROME OPERA THEATRE, THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROME AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY

The three International Federations representing workers in the Arts and Entertainment sector call upon the Board of the Rome Opera Theatre to reverse its decision to dismiss all orchestra musicians and choir members

The International Federation of Musicians (FIM), the International Federation of Actors (FIA), UNI - Media, Entertainment & Arts (UNI MEI) and their member organisations in more than 120 countries were extremely shocked to learn about the decision of the Board of the Rome Opera to terminate the contracts of all the orchestra musicians and choir members of this institution, in a disgraceful act of cultural vandalism. This decision is short-sighted, totally inappropriate from a management and labour point of view and extremely dangerous from an artistic perspective.

The three signatory federations wish to also vigorously denounce the wrongful assertions made by the Board to justify its decision. Contrary to its affirmations, no other European capital has made the mistake of outsourcing the artistic human resources of such an emblematic institution as the Rome Opera. It is common knowledge that the personality of an orchestra, its mastery of a vast repertoire with the required level of performance and, finally, its international reputation rely on its own, permanent artists as well as on years of daily collective and individual practice. No professional involved in opera or orchestra management can seriously recommend trading a permanent orchestra of international reputation against a non-existent, hypothetical, external entity.

What is at stake is not only the jobs of 182 skilled, dedicated artists and the livelihoods of their families. It is also about delivering a fundamental service of the highest possible quality to all music lovers in Italy and beyond. Decades of patient work are necessary to build a world-class institution like the Rome Opera. One wrong, hasty decision suffices to irrevocably break it. Italy gave the art of opera to the world. It would be a tragedy if the capital of opera's homeland was to give up its own culture and unique heritage.

FIM, FIA and UNI MEI strongly believe that a different solution to the current crisis can be found. To this end, they urge the Rome Opera Board, the Municipality of Rome and the Italian Government to immediately announce the reinstatement of all dismissed artists and to enter into a genuine, professional and open-minded negotiation excluding any form of outsourcing. The international music community would not understand if the Italian Government, which currently holds the Presidency of the European Union, did not take all necessary measures to ensure that the brutal, anti-cultural decision of the Rome Opera Board be overturned.

Support to symphony and opera music, theatre, dance and ballet, which are a precious and fragile part of the world's cultural heritage, is a prime responsibility of national, regional and local governments. The conscious, voluntary destruction of a pillar of Italian culture cannot be an option.

FIM, FIA and UNI MEI stand ready to facilitate the resumption of negotiations with a view to reaching a reasonable compromise, in the interest of all parties concerned.



Together, FIM, FIA, and UNI-MEI form the International Arts and Entertainment alliance (IAEA). This global sectoral alliance is a member of the Council of Global Unions and the ETUC and is a recognised European social partner organisation