Dear SYSO Academic Year Orchestra Families:

As you all know, this has been a very challenging spring. We were looking forward to our regularly planned weekly rehearsals and concerts. After social distancing guidelines and ensuing rehearsal and concert cancellations, we updated our plans—hoping to be able to extend the season with a June 20 concert at Benaroya Hall. Given a variety of obstacles though, such as lack of school facilities for rehearsals and uncertainties around the public health situation, we are not able to move forward with this plan and the June 20 concert.

It is incredibly disappointing to us that we will not see you again in-person soon. That said, we plan to stay connected and continue these educational activities through May 30:

• **SYSOTalks with Juan Felipe** on Saturdays at 10 a.m. via Zoom - We are now able to take up to 500 participants in each session; all SYSO students are welcome!

• **YSO Wednesday Hangouts** – We continue having our YSO meetings on Wednesdays at 4 pm; it is a space for YSO members to keep learning and have fun.

• **Weekly Emails from your Conductor** – Conductors will continue to reach out to their orchestras to provide tips for practicing, resources, advice, and guidance.

• **Student Check-in Videos for Conductor Feedback** - Your conductor would like to hear you play! Send your conductor one 20-60 second video of an excerpt of your choice. Your conductor will view the video, provide feedback, and share it with the conductor of the next level orchestra. Orchestra secretaries will send out a link for uploading your video in the next week.

• **SYSOChallenges** – Your conductors may also pose a #SYSOChallenge. For example, can you or your section mates swap hands and still play their instruments? Post your challenge on social media - #SYSOChallenge - see who else can rise to the occasion!

In the midst of this new normal, one thing we are certain of is that we will continue to communicate with you, and you can always reach out to us. We want to get back together in-person, but your safety is our top concern. We'll continue to closely monitor public health guidelines to know when we can reconnect in person. Please take care of yourself and keep making music!

Please click here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kzbulOU3FE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kzbulOU3FE&feature=youtu.be) for a message from SYSO Music Director Juan Felipe Molano.

**ACADEMIC YEAR ORCHESTRAS** - Since March 7, rehearsals and both the March 22 and May 10 concerts have been canceled due to the Governor’s Stay at Home, Stay Healthy orders. While
plans remain fluid, we hope to resume in-person rehearsals with an end of season performance, possibly later than originally scheduled. Until then, orchestra conductors and coaches encourage students to practice and provide tips and resources. To continue their orchestral music education students can attend the weekly Zoom videoconferencing session: “SYSOTalks with Juan Felipe” on Saturdays at 10 a.m. Orchestra Secretaries will send the Zoom link and topics, which be of interest to all levels of orchestras.

**SEATTLE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC** - With in-person classes canceled through April 25, conservatory faculty have continued to engage students with learning material and assignments. As much as possible, academic and college preparatory classes, as well as chamber music ensembles, will meet via Zoom video conferencing. Violin classes will be made up when in-person learning resumes. The Spring Recital is being rescheduled for June if possible.

**SYSO IN THE SCHOOLS** - In-class coaching for the two SYSO in the Schools programs, Endangered Instruments Program and Musical Pathways Project, remain suspended until schools open. In the meanwhile, our Musical Pathways Project faculty is providing professional development online to public school music educators in the program. As well, coaches are providing learning resources to students in the Cadenza After School Orchestra Club.

**MARROWSTONE MUSIC FESTIVAL** - After much deliberation, the SYSO leadership and board have made the difficult decision to cancel the Marrowstone Music Festival this summer. We have been looking forward to another exciting summer of outstanding music and apologize for this very disappointing news. However, when faced with the many uncertainties stemming from COVID-19, we concluded that the program was not feasible to run this summer. We are still exploring ways to support the year-round musical development of Seattle area students and plan to stay in touch as any additional opportunities arise.

**SYSO SUMMER MUSIC** - The two sessions of SYSO Summer Music at Shorecrest High School from July 6-17, and at Newport High School from July 13-24, are planned to run as scheduled. We will notify families of any changes to these plans.

**SYSO OFFICE** - In response to Governor Inslee’s recent Stay at Home order, the SYSO office is closed from March 26 until May 5 unless the order is extended. All SYSO staff are working from home and are available by email or phone. Please feel free to leave a voicemail as staff can access voicemail remotely.