Dear SYSO Families:

For the Academic Year Orchestra program, the May concert has always been a wonderful celebration of our students’ dedication and hard work during the year. However, the health and safety of our students, faculty, conductors, and community come first, and we are committed to doing our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by complying with Governor Inslee’s extension of the Stay at Home order. As a result, we are canceling the Five Orchestras concert on May 10 at Benaroya Hall.

We will continue to enable learning, although in different ways, for our AYO students through this period of social distancing and the remainder of the regularly scheduled program:

- We are introducing new weekly learning sessions—SYSOTalks with Juan Felipe—every Saturday from 10-10:30 a.m. We invite all AYO students to hear Music Director Juan Felipe discuss topics important to the growth of every young musician. Last Saturday, he provided valuable advice and guidance about auditions, and tomorrow he will discuss sight reading.

- Conductors will continue to reach out to their orchestras with practice guidance, learning resources, and words of encouragement for students to continue orchestral music education for the rest of the season.

- We are hoping to resume rehearsals, if and when students go back to school, and possibly extend the AYO season. Assuming public health guidelines will allow and pending venue availability, we would like to start rehearsals in late May or early June at the latest for a June 20 concert at Benaroya Hall. We will continue to send updates as developments occur.

For families who have already purchased tickets to the May 10 concert, please consider making your ticket purchase a donation. If you would prefer a refund, please contact tickets@seattlesymphony.org.

We’ve received a few inquiries regarding our tuition policy, and in the spirit of transparency would like to explain our policy further.

- SYSO, as a non-profit, relies on both tuition and contributions to cover its expenses and continue operations. Just like any organization, we have both fixed and variable costs. A high percentage of SYSO costs are fixed costs; this includes staff and conductor salaries, office rent, equipment, insurance, etc. SYSO incurs and pays these costs even when rehearsals or concerts are cancelled.
• While we have not incurred facility rental and some portion of coaching fees the past several weeks due to canceled rehearsals, SYSO faces a substantial loss of revenue—in contributions and ticket sales due to the cancellation of the March fundraiser and concerts in March and May. This revenue loss is significant and puts SYSO financially in a precarious position.

We hope families understand why SYSO is continuing to follow its no tuition refund policy. Simply, refunding tuition would jeopardize the future of SYSO, and we want SYSO to be here in September for your children to re-connect and make music together again. Your support for our tuition policy will help ensure that SYSO is fully ready later this year to embark on its 77th season.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many families in our region. We are committed to working with SYSO families who may be experiencing financial hardship on a case by case basis and encourage these families to contact Executive Director Kathleen Allen at Kathleen.allen@syso.org.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding during these challenging times. We appreciate everything you do to support our young musicians. Please stay safe and healthy.

With gratitude,

Juan Felipe Molano
Music Director

Kathleen Allen
Executive Director