

Dear Yakima Symphony Orchestra Patrons,

August 8, 2020

We had hoped by this point in the summer to know much more than we do about our prospects for resumption of regular performance activity. Since Yakima is still in a modified Phase One of reopening, and even the gathering of an orchestra to rehearse requires our community to be in at least Phase Four, it is not possible at this time to say with any certainty when we will next perform. The good news is that trends are finally moving in the right direction: our community has gone from minimal compliance with CDC recommendations two months ago to better than 90% compliance in recent weeks; and, as a result, new cases of Covid-19 have been below 100 per day for more than a week straight.

Still, we cannot predict when we will reach the benchmarks that would allow movement into Phase Four, and furthermore our industry is still in the process of conducting and analyzing scientific research which can help us assure the safety of our musicians and audience once are once again able to gather together; as a well-publicized case of a chorus to our west made clear, music-making by singers and players of wind and brass instruments comes with increased risk of aerosol transmission.

As a result, it will surely come as a surprise to no one that the first four programs of our 2020-21 season cannot proceed as planned. Given the preparation and production timelines for an orchestral concert, and the logistics of distancing both on stage and for the audience in any performance venue, the Yakima Symphony Orchestra does not plan to present any formal live, in-person performances at least through November of 2020. This includes our September 19th *Cirque de la Symphonie* program, October 2nd program featuring the Yakima Symphony Chorus, October 10th Tchaikovsky program and November 7th program of music from the cinema.

For the choral program on October 2nd, our intent is simply to leave this program simmering on a back burner until we are able to present it in full at a later date. Once it has been rescheduled, tickets purchased for the original date will be reissued for the new date. Anyone who is unable to attend, or who prefers not to wait for that announcement, may request a refund or may opt to donate the ticket purchase to YSO to support ongoing operations.

For subscribers with tickets to the three orchestral programs, we are planning programs of chamber music to replace each canceled concert date this fall, each similar in musical content to the programs that could not be presented with full orchestra. Given distancing requirements in Phase Four, we expect to schedule multiple performances of each of these programs in order to accommodate as many subscribers as may be comfortable to attend in person. We also are working on options for virtual presentation of these programs for patrons who are not able to attend in person. As long as distancing requirements are in place, single tickets for these programs will be available only on a very limited basis, if at all. In the coming weeks, subscribers should expect to receive in the mail more detailed information about these offerings, and about how subscription ticketing will be handled for this season since the Capitol Theatre is unable to process our subscription tickets in the usual manner.

We also know that we will not be able to present the December *Holiday Pops Spectacular* in the format originally planned, given the number of musicians that would need to be on stage and the effect of current prohibitions on the ability of both the chorus and Yakima Music en Acción to prepare for live performance during the next few months. Announcements about a possible replacement program on those dates, or at a later time, will be forthcoming later this fall. At this time, we are not changing plans for winter and spring programming; decisions will be made and announced regarding those concert dates toward the end of 2020.

In the meantime, YSO will continue to develop virtual content for our From Home series, and we are planning some special interactive and broadcast events for the months that we cannot take the stage in a live format. The Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra has been holding summer auditions for a fall semester of virtual programming and will hold a second round of auditions in September; we hope that this may develop into some form of in-person programming by spring. We will be following intently our community's progress toward reopening, as well as orchestra and entertainment industry developments to ensure that, when we can gather once again to enjoy live music in person, we can do so with as little risk to musicians and patrons as possible.

The YSO office continues to be closed, with staff working from home, but please reach out to us if you have questions. The best way to reach us is still via email: [info@ysomusic.org](mailto:info@ysomusic.org). Phone messages may be left for us at (509) 248-1414; these are checked regularly, and we will respond as quickly as possible, but no one is in the office to answer calls directly. We look forward to sharing upcoming opportunities to connect with one another through music, in whatever ways we can, and we look forward to seeing all of you again in person as soon as we are able.

Best wishes,  
David Rogers, Executive Director, Yakima Symphony Orchestra