**Susquehanna Symphony Orchestra**

**Members of the Board:**

Corporate:

President – Jim Weed

Vice President – Paul Koermer

Vice President – Diane Sengstacke

Treasurer -- Rob Adkins

Secretary – Michele Martin

Appointed:

Personnel – Amy Wilkinson

Student Personnel – Anne Pape

Publicity – Shannon Raum

Wendy Bohdel

Jessica Conklin

Laura Donall

Mary Eilerman

Richard Johnson

Danielle Noe

Non-Voting:

Music Director - Sheldon Bair

Orchestra Manager – Amy Hyman

Librarian – Katie Stout

**Board Meeting via Zoom:** Wednesday, April 1; 7:00 PM

**Attendees:** Rob Adkins, Sheldon Bair, Wendy Bohdel, Jessica Conklin, Laura Donall, Mary Eilerman, Amy Hyman, Richard Johnson, Paul Koermer, Michele Martin, Anne Pape, Shannon Raum, Diane Sengstacke, Jim Weed, . *Quorum present.*

* The Meeting was convened at 7:00 PM.

## Compensating Patrons for Concerts Cancelled Due to COVID-19

* Danielle pointed out that the physical tickets themselves do say that we will offer a refund, despite (as Colleen pointed out via e-mail) our previous stance of offering compensation in the form of a ticket to a future concert.
  + Going forward we should review and maybe revise the refund policy printed in the programs since it conflicts with what is printed on the tickets.
* Sheldon notes that other orchestras’ websites list options in the order of: donate, use ticket for a concert next season, or a refund.
* Amy Hyman has had contacts with patrons who have offered to donate the cost to the orchestra, and many other Board members agree that we should encourage donation of funds to the orchestra.
* The number of tickets sold so far (at the time of the meeting) includes 104 season tickets, 126 tickets for the March concert, and 19 for the May Concert.
* Purplepass can issue full refunds for the individual concert tickets, but also defaults to doing a full refund for the season tickets as well. The season tickets should not be fully refunded.
* Sheldon noted that the SSO Website has not been updated to include the cancellation of the May Concert. Since the orchestra cannot rehearse at HCC due to closures and it will be hard to find any alternate rehearsal venue it will not be possible to prepare for the May Concert, regardless of whether or not any social distancing restrictions have been lifted. (Note: as of this writing, schools state wide are closed through May 15th which makes the issue of having rehearsal space moot).
* Sheldon also offered a “Tea with the Maestro” option for which vouchers can be given in lieu of a full price ticket refund.
* Season ticket holders could be offered half-price season tickets for next season and encouraged to donate the cost of this season’s ticket to the orchestra.
* The Board agreed that two separate letters should be sent – one to season ticket holders with a emphasis on thanking them for their support and encouraging donations and a separate on to single ticket purchasers.
  + Wendy will draft the letter to season ticket holders.
* The last time the SSO had to cancel a concert was in 1993 due to a blizzard.

## Impact to the Budget of Cancellations

* Rob e-mailed financial information just before the Board Meeting.
* The orchestra does not incur many costs for cancelled concerts (and it was confirmed with Harford County Public Schools that the orchestra would not be charged rent for the cancelled March concert).
  + The costs actually incurred for the March concert include: programs and Kinga’s train ticket.
  + We may also need to reimburse Jenn Hutt, who had already spent $703 for a flight to attend the May concert, if the airline does not issue her a refund.
* Paul estimated (“back of envelope” calculation) that the cost to refund all the tickets if no one donates the fees would be about $7060. This does not include any refunds to those who purchased ads for the programs.
* While there are provisions for non-profits impacted by COVID-19 in the CARES Act just passed by Congress, Rob would prefer to not take any money from that.
  + Other Board members disagree and are looking into whether the SSO qualifies. Danielle tried to sit in on an American Orchestra phone call regarding the CARES Act and community orchestras but was unable to get in. Slides of the discussion will be sent out later.

## “Endowment” Fund

* There has been some confusion about the approximately $100,000 that was left to the orchestra by a past supporter in her will.
* Ideally, it is there to be used for emergencies such as loss of revenue due to cancelled concerts.
* It has recently been folded into the overall operating budget, though that was not the original intention of the Board.
  + While there were no restrictions on the original donation, the Board had voted in the past to hold that money separate as a “rainy day” fund.
  + Whether or not it is considered part of the operating budget may impact the orchestra’s ability to apply for CARES grants/loans.
  + However, Rob is concerned about being able to pay orchestra bills if he cannot tap into it, especially for costs that come up during the periods between seasons when revenue dips lower.
  + Shannon may have the original info and will look into it. She may also talk with Mark & Colleen to see what they remember about it.

## SSO Going Forward

* Sheldon would like to hold a free concert for the community once pandemic-related restrictions are lifted. He is looking into possibly doing the Schumann Cello Concerto, Star Wars, and other music the orchestra knows and can polish in about 3 rehearsals.
* Looking at next season, Sheldon would like to keep costs down.
  + Kinga is willing to return next year.
  + He would still like to do the Saens-Saer Organ piece
* There is still the issue of how to handle the drawing for the raffle tickets. If there is some sort of summer concert, it would make sense to have the drawing then.
  + Don’t want to bleed into next season since that would impact 2020-2021 fund-raising.
* The SSO musicians should be asked to send photos of themselves rehearsing that could be posted to the orchestra’s Facebook page to remind fans that orchestra members are still making music and look forward to being able to perform again.
  + This is similar to what other businesses are doing.
* Sheldon mentioned some sad orchestra-related news: Helen Shanahan, a long-time cellist in the SSO and a former HCPS music teacher, has passed away. Also, Barb Hill’s husband has passed from terminal cancer. There will be a memorial on June 13 at McComas Funeral Home.
  + Danielle texted Barb recently and reports she is doing well.
  + The Board will send a condolence card to Barb and to Helen’s daughter if her address can be found.
* The orchestra has several nurses and medical personnel among its players, so keep them and their health/safety in your thoughts & prayers

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, April 19th at 2:00 PM via ZOOM.** The meeting ID number is 895 377 013