

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES WORKFORCE REDUCTION AS A RESULT OF FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19

Boston – August 21, 2020 – In direct response to the devastating financial effects of COVID-19, the Boston Symphony Orchestra has made the difficult decision to implement administrative staff layoffs as of September 1. The layoffs are part of an overall effort to sustain the organization’s fiscal viability through the immediate pandemic period and into the future.

Along with many other cultural institutions nationwide, the BSO canceled live performances starting in mid-March, and its re-opening date remains uncertain. Interruptions to the BSO’s business operations were widespread, and thus far, have encompassed the cancellation of 316 concerts and events, March 13–November 28, including the last seven weeks of the 2019–20 season, the entirety of the 2020 Boston Pops season, the live performance of the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular, the 2020 Tanglewood season, and the fall portion of the 2020–21 BSO season. These canceled performances have incurred a \$35 million loss in revenue for the organization.

As a result of lost revenue and an undetermined timetable for return to full operations, the organization will lay off 50 employees out of a current full-time administrative staff of 180 (30 additional positions have been frozen or left vacant since March 2020). The remaining full-time staff will number 130. The plan at this time also includes eight full-time staff members being furloughed at various periods from September through December. The layoffs and furloughs have been determined following an analysis of the orchestra’s operations and the staffing needed given the reduced workload during the upcoming period of live performance hiatus.

Quote from Mark Volpe, The Eunice and Julian Cohen BSO President and CEO

“It is with a heavy heart that we have made some difficult decisions about reducing the organization’s workforce during this unprecedented time of concert cancellations and revenue loss associated with COVID-19,” said Mark Volpe, the Eunice and Julian Cohen BSO President and CEO. “On behalf of everyone at the BSO, including our Music Director Andris Nelsons, it has been an honor to work side by side with many of the most gifted and dedicated staff in the orchestra industry and we are truly grateful for the countless contributions our colleagues have made to ensure the orchestra’s success.

“Through this difficult time and the many challenges ahead, we are determined to re-establish the concert-going experience that has inspired generations of audiences to make the BSO an essential and inspiring part of their lives.”

In its initial response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the BSO made a series of announcements that detailed the full slate of cancellations and early measures taken to reduce costs. These previous announcements, along with the press release about the BSO’s initial set of cost cutting measures announced in April, can be found [here](#).

In September, the BSO will announce details related to the creation and distribution of online content in lieu of live performances this fall.

The BSO will continue to monitor recommendations the Centers for Disease Control and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as well as confer with its own team of medical experts on matters related to an eventual reopening. All updates on this subject will be announced through press releases and postings on www.bso.org.