

EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020

Contact: Nick Pullia
847-662-0011
npullia@ravinia.org

RAVINIA CANCELS 2020 SEASON DUE TO COVID PANDEMIC

Decision made to protect health and safety of Ravinia's audiences, artists, staff, and neighbors during national calamity

HIGHLAND PARK, IL — In response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Ravinia, the oldest music festival in the country, has been forced to cancel its 2020 season. Ravinia has operated continually since its 1904 opening except for 1932–1935, when the park was silenced by the Great Depression. The not-for-profit festival was to have presented more than 120 events from June 12 through September 16, including the annual summer residency of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The festival's summer conservatory, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, will also be closed this summer.

Ravinia President and CEO Welz Kauffman, who late last year announced that 2020 would be his final season at the helm, explained that factors driving this decision prioritized the health and safety of Ravinia's artists, audiences, staff, and neighbors, and follows similar cancellations of other summer festivals, along with their training programs.

Since February, Ravinia has been working with its guest artists—some of whom have already canceled their entire 2020 summer tours—to determine how best to proceed, including opportunities to rebook these performers into future seasons. Ravinia's leadership has also been closely monitoring the evolving warnings of local, state, and national authorities to avoid large gatherings.

“Ravinia benefits from an informed and responsible Board of Trustees and engaged family of volunteers, and our lengthy and thorough discourse on this topic has brought us to the conclusion that it is impossible to move ahead with the season,” Kauffman said.

Anyone who purchased tickets can receive refunds or vouchers for future performances, or they can convert those funds into much-needed tax-deductible donations.

In addition to online concert footage and interviews in support of the May 15 national PBS broadcast premiere of Bernstein's *Mass* filmed last summer, Kauffman emphasized that he and the Ravinia staff are developing ideas to give the festival a “from home” presence across social platforms, including “virtual” opportunities for lectures, master classes, and rehearsals for the Lake and Cook County elementary school students who participate in Reach Teach Play, as well as for the young professionals who won acceptance to RSMI this year.

“The lives of these young students have been thrown in total disarray, so it is important that Ravinia helps where it can to provide the structure of these virtual classrooms. Our programs give young people a

means of expression and connection with each other and their own quarantined families. We teach them that music is their superpower, and what better time than now to have a superpower?" Kauffman said.

"The crisis created by the Covid pandemic has impacted so much of our lives in dramatic ways. Ravinia will do its part in helping the nation recover," said Ravinia Board Chairman Don Civgin, "and we will celebrate that recovery with music under the stars next summer."

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