

RICHMOND SYMPHONY ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 12:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Mark Cox (VC), Ron Crutcher, David Fisk, Gary Flowers (Chair), Chris Lindbloom, George Mahoney – and Music Director Designate Valentina Peleggi!
Musicians Present: Mary Boodell, Barbara Gaden, Ismar Gomes, Jim Jacobson, David Lemelin, Schuyler Slack,
Also Present: Jen Arnold
Members Absent: Brennan Keene

I. Welcome, greetings, and agenda items review

II. Approval of Minutes from February 19, 2020 meeting.

- (i) Minutes from the previous meeting were approved with the amendment that Schuyler Slack be counted as present in the previous meeting.

III. Discussion of Guest Conductor Policy

- (i) Jen Arnold thanked the Artistic Advisory Committee and Mary Boodell, in particular, for the constructive dialogue, and for working hard to help refine the framework for the RSO Guest Conductor Policy. Points were made that some musicians felt that in the past the RSO was engaging fewer guest conductors than was previously agreed upon, and that the revised policy would go far in providing clarity to all. The consensus is that it is optimal to engage conductors for two Masterworks concert runs and one Metro concert run.
- (ii) Valentina stated she agreed wholeheartedly that the importance of utilizing guest conductors was paramount, and that she was pleased to remain open and available to discuss at any time. She characterized the engagement of guest conductors as a journey not only for RSO musicians but for audiences as well.
- (iii) It was the opinion of the Committee that it would be appropriate to take the next steps in firming up the Guest Conductor policy. Chairman Gary Flowers asked for a motion to take the proposal - based on the work of the AAC – to the RSO Board. *George Mahoney called for the motion, seconded by Chris Lindbloom and the Committee approved.*

IV. Discussion of the April Work Plan

- (i) Personnel Retention: Jen Arnold updated the Committee that musician contracts had been returned. One musician has accepted a position with another orchestra, and two others are leaving the RSO. Everyone else is returning. Additionally, there was discussion regarding tenure for this season. Jen stated that a plan was developed in consultation with Music Advisor George Manahan and in consideration of the current pandemic situation. In accordance with that plan, no musician currently up for tenure will be released at the conclusion of this season. RSO musicians will either be granted tenure or they will have contracts extended until such a time when a tenure review would be considered possible; decisions to be made by May 1, 2021.
- (ii) Auditions will be held beginning in autumn and continuing on throughout the season as Valentina's scheduling allows.

David Fisk joined the meeting at this point.

V. Discussion of New Business: COVID-19 Considerations

There was a general discussion surrounding what a return to the stage might look like, taking into account audience and musician safety. George noted that best practices and protocols will emerge as industry standards, once other performing groups also get back to work.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 12:00pm