



**BYSO**

Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras

Federico Cortese, Music Director

2020

**IMPACT**

REPORT



# OUR MISSION

Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras' (BYSO) mission is to encourage artistic excellence in a nurturing environment by providing the highest quality orchestral training and performance opportunities to qualified musicians, grades K-12, while making its programs accessible to underrepresented youth through financial aid and outreach.

**EXCELLENCE:** BYSO believes high-quality music experiences have a long-lasting impact on young musicians and audience members. Quality is at the heart of BYSO's programs, supported by the finest musicians in the area who serve as our coaches and conductors.

**ACCESS:** BYSO makes quality music experiences available to all young people, regardless of social or economic disadvantage. Our Intensive Community Program (ICP) offers rigorous string and winds training to Boston's underserved communities, preparing students for competitive auditions into BYSO orchestras. BYSO provides use of an instrument, weekly lessons and support for participation in the orchestras from the time a student joins the program (age 5 or 6) until they graduate high school. The program serves 80–90 students annually.

**INSPIRATION:** Alongside training young musicians, we are dedicated to cultivating young audiences. Each year, BYSO presents more than 20 performances in some of Boston's finest venues including Symphony Hall and Sanders Theatre at Harvard University. Through our free ticketing programs and community concerts, BYSO welcomes thousands of young community members annually. BYSO's partnership with Boston Symphony Orchestra, *BYSO/BSO: Partnering for the Future*, sees children as young as 3 years old enjoy the magic of classical music.

# THANK YOU

Through the generous support of our partners and donors like you, over 500 young musicians were able to experience the incredible personal growth that comes with a high-quality music education.

Despite the many challenges posed this season, music making continued virtually for all of our students. We hope you'll read on for an inside look at what your support has made possible this year, including the:

500+ students served

39 graduating seniors

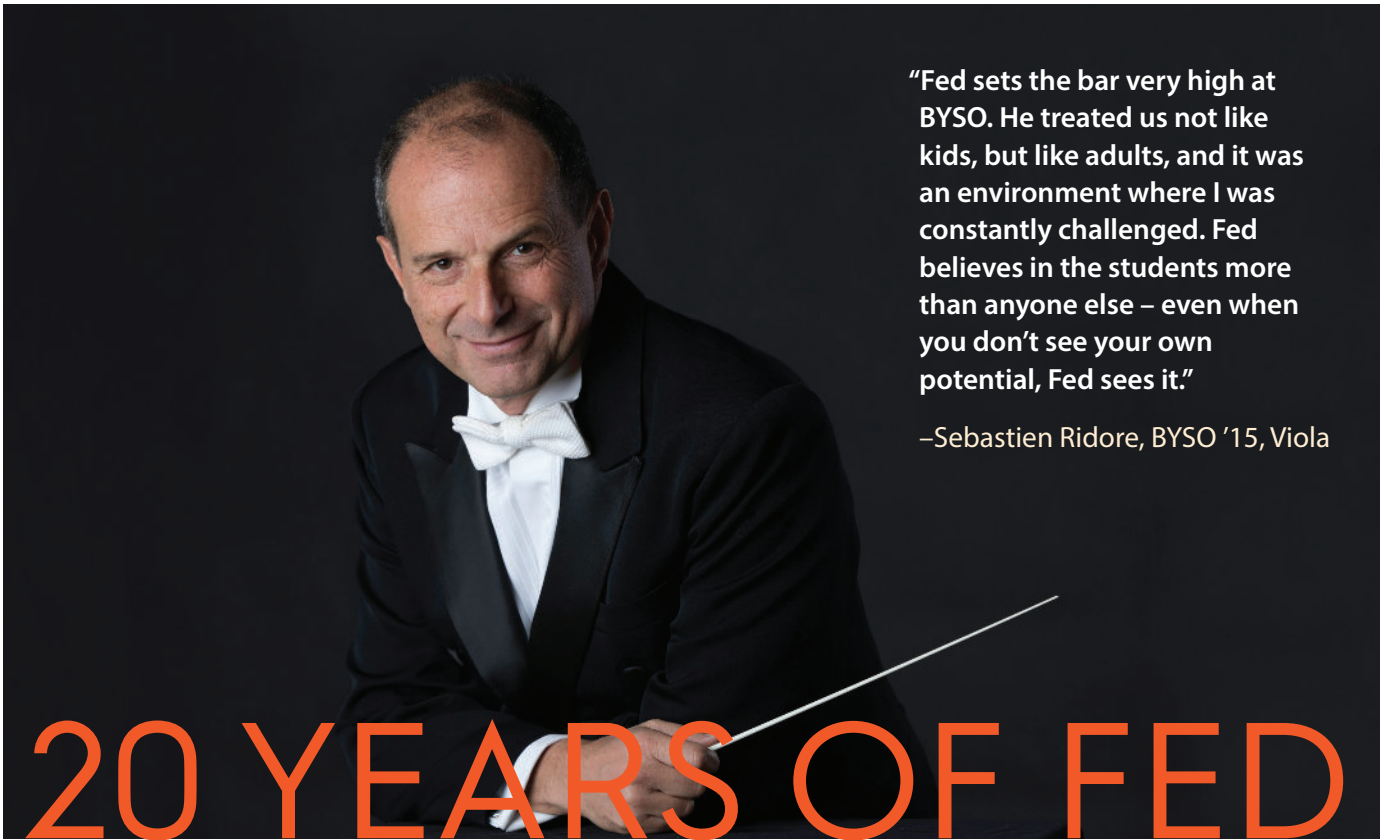
11 weeks of virtual programming

14 in-person concerts

17 ICP First Year Strings students

On behalf of every student, and every member of the organization, thank you! We are so grateful to have supporters like you who believe in our mission of making classical music accessible to all students, regardless of background or circumstance.





**“Fed sets the bar very high at BYSO. He treated us not like kids, but like adults, and it was an environment where I was constantly challenged. Fed believes in the students more than anyone else – even when you don’t see your own potential, Fed sees it.”**

**–Sebastien Ridore, BYSO '15, Viola**

This season we celebrated Federico Cortese and his 20th anniversary as Music Director of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras. Fed’s visionary leadership and his sincere care for our young musicians and the future of BYSO has led our organization to a new level of excellence that was unimaginable 20 years ago.

**“He was so incredibly passionate. It resonated with us every time he conducted; anytime he was present with us. I loved his enthusiasm, and it was clear that he enjoyed being around us, working together, and how much he loves BYSO. I can see how much BYSO has grown because of his dedication to the organization, and I’m sure it will continue to expand even more.”**

**–Krista Olson, BYSO '02, Viola**

Maestro Cortese’s dedication to the musical excellence and personal growth of our students has been the impetus for many new initiatives including:

- Doubled the number of students in the program
- Welcomed 200,000 audience members to BYSO performances
- Created BYSO’s exceptional opera program, with world-renowned singers; BYSO is the only youth orchestra in America to present a semi-staged opera performance
- Established a formal partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in 2012 – “BYSO/BSO Partnering for the Future,” featuring the BSO Family Concert Series and the bi-annual opera productions for children and families that has brought classical music to 65,000 new audience members
- Created BYSO On Parade, a bi-annual concert featuring all BYSO ensembles and students at Boston’s Symphony Hall
- Led 8 successful international tours to France, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Germany, England, and Austria
- Created unprecedented growth in BYSO’s Intensive Community Program and its presence in the Boston Public Schools
- Developed several new ensembles, including six chamber orchestras, the Preparatory Winds (PW) and the Petit Ensemble (PE)



# 10 YEARS OF JOE GRIMALDI

This season also marked the end of the tenure of Joe Grimaldi's time as President of the BYSO Board of Directors. Under his leadership, BYSO has developed new and supportive partnerships, expanded to serve more students than ever before, and taken steps towards a bold vision for our future.

Joe has led BYSO with passion, bold thinking and just like BYSO students, the drive to do better and to be more.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE,  
AND CONGRATULATIONS JOE.  
YOU WILL BE MISSED!**



# 2019-2020

## SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



On Sunday, October 13, 2019, BYSO held its first concert of the season at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University.

While BYSO students transitioned to remote learning in March 2020, our 2019-2020 season was filled with many of the unique performance opportunities that have become hallmarks of the BYSO experience.

**This season marks the 20th anniversary of Music Director Federico Cortese joining BYSO. The students celebrated at rehearsal by surprising Fed with special t-shirts printed for the occasion.**



**BYSO's 11th annual performance of *Peter and the Wolf* was on Saturday, November 9, 2019. This performance is part of BYSO's partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, *BYSO/BSO: Partnering for the Future*, which includes a concert series providing engaging, age-appropriate, educational orchestral experiences for children and families. This season, the concert was narrated by Vira Slywotzky, BYSO alumna '00 and sister to staff member and alumnus Adrian Slywotzky '98.**

Students from the Intensive Community Program performed at the 13th annual MLK, Jr. Tribute Concert on Monday, January 20, 2020 in collaboration with the Museum of African American History.



The Boston Youth Symphony (BYS) – BYSO's top-level orchestra – performed Verdi's AIDA in front of a sold-out crowd on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at Sanders Theatre at Harvard University. This performance, the 16th semi-staged opera in our history, featured an international cast of singers and a 52 person BYSO Chorus.



BYSO's annual Gala was scheduled to take place in person on Saturday, March 14, 2020. With the rising concern about COVID-19, BYSO made a pivot in 72 hours to a fully virtual experience. Despite the sudden shift, the Gala was a great success, and we netted \$40,000 more than originally budgeted.



In March 2020, all in-person rehearsals and concerts were canceled for the remainder of the season, and staff and students shifted to weekly Sunday rehearsals online. Although many of our students and families were especially impacted by COVID-19, they showed a great deal of resilience this season. For members of our Intensive Community Program, private lessons continued online, and students even held several virtual performances with our ICP first-year students and this season's 2020 graduating ICP seniors.

# MAKING MUSIC IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

In the midst of significant global events, the music at BYSO continued. In March 2020, BYSO switched from in-person rehearsals to a fully virtual curriculum in the wake of a rapidly evolving COVID-19 global pandemic.

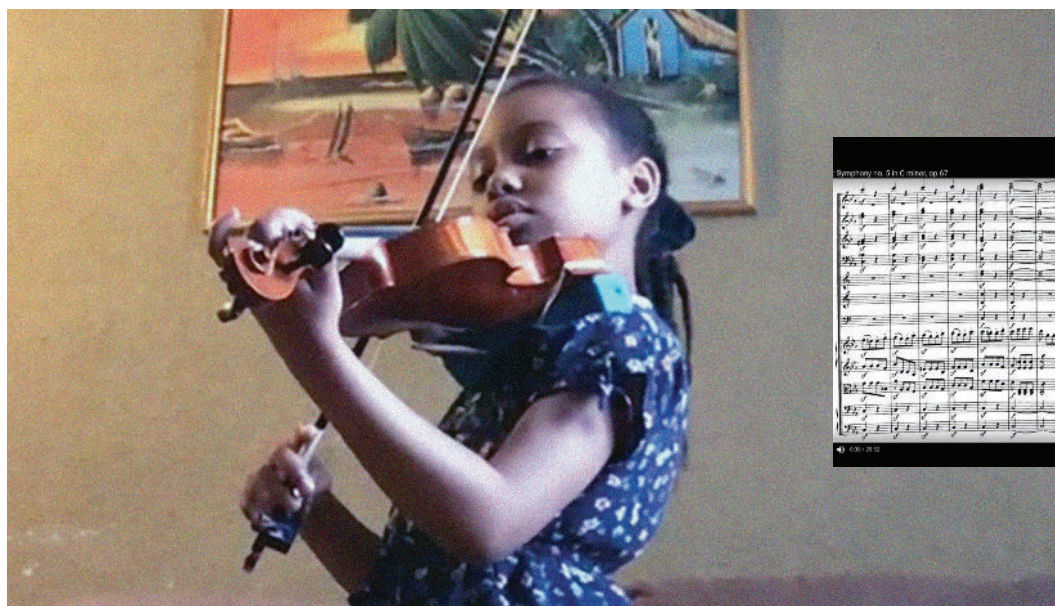
Although this meant the cancellation of several concerts, BYSO faculty, staff, and students quickly embraced new tools and technology to pivot successfully and explore new facets of music education. In fact, there were a number of opportunities that an online curriculum provided to students that were originally outside the scope of their in-person rehearsals, including:

- Score study sessions, where students learned more about the history and context of their pieces
- ICP weekly lessons continuing remotely throughout the remainder of the season. Without coaches to assist, BYSO provided parents with a crash course in helping their young students tune their instruments – a unique learning experience and bonding opportunity for families!
- A virtual performance of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' – a video project that featured students across BYSO ensembles
- The opportunity for students to become more comfortable with recording technology



Furthermore, alumni events that were scheduled for the season shifted to an online format, connecting BYSO alumni from all across the country, internationally, and right here in the Greater Boston area.

In an unexpected and uncertain time, the BYSO community proved to be incredibly resilient. The music was never put on pause, and students continued to form lasting friendships, create new memories, and work towards artistic excellence until the very end of the season.





Due to a highly successful Gala, and a significant cut in production costs for the final quarter of FY20, BYSO was able to post a small surplus that will help us weather the storm of a highly probable deficit in FY21.

# BUDGET

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020 (unaudited)

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>FY20</b>
Tuition and Fees	\$1,657,530
Ticket Sales	\$113,337
Program Book Advertising	\$4,554
Merchandise Sales and Other Earned Revenue	\$8,830
Foundation Support	\$470,000
Government Support	\$73,400
Corporate Support and Sponsorships	\$79,100
Individual Support	\$354,527
Special Event	\$304,265
Donated Goods and Services	\$230,316
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,295,859</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Concert Production	\$249,849
Orchestra Operations	\$842,333
Additional Online Programming (March through June)	\$30,804
Intensive Community Program (direct cost only)	\$318,914
Camp	\$276,590
Financial Aid	\$138,174
Administrative Salaries and Benefits	\$892,077
Other Administrative	\$353,904
Marketing	\$54,992
Fundraising (includes special event costs)	\$80,577
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,238,214</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$57,645</b>

# STUDENTS



## IRIS, 16 VIOLA

Iris is a viola player in BYS who has been a member of BYSO since 2015. Looking back at her five years with BYSO, she reflects that she has experienced huge growth as a musician since joining the organization. "I didn't have as many musical opportunities until I joined BYSO. It's been a great opportunity to play repertoire that I find challenging, as well as unique performances like the Opera, or the children's concert series. It takes a lot of concentration and work – more work than I've had to put in anywhere else, but I love finding out just how much I am able to accomplish."

One of Iris' biggest lessons at BYSO has been the value of teamwork. "Learning music is an educational experience, but it goes beyond just learning the notes – it teaches you how to collaborate with others, and how to create art together. When you're playing as an orchestra, it takes a lot of cooperation – you have to be able to work well together, within your own section and the group as a whole. You learn from one another, and learn to take advice and constructive criticism from others. It helps build self-awareness within yourself."

**"I often think to myself, 'How lucky am I to have all these people to help me?' The culture among the students and the staff is unlike anywhere else. They really care about what they do and about the students."**

## MAEREG, 11 DOUBLE BASS

Maereg is a 4th year student at BYSO who joined ICP when she was seven years old. Her favorite aspect of BYSO is the community. "BYSO feels like a family. Everyone knows each other, and even when you're new you feel welcome right away."

Maereg feels as though she's learned so much while being at BYSO already. "BYSO has taught me important life lessons like being on time, and the value of working hard. I've also learned that it's okay to make mistakes – it's okay to not know something right away, and if I work at it I can get it right." This past year, Maereg performed with her school's fifth grade orchestra despite being in third grade, due to her advanced level of proficiency.



Maereg believes strongly in the value of music and its ability to bring people together. "Music is universal – everybody needs music, and everyone can relate to it. When I'm on stage, I feel like I am the author and the music is the story, and I have to execute it for the audience to understand."

**"If anyone is thinking about joining BYSO, I'd want them to know that it's a great place to be, to play music, to make friends, and to have fun."**



## BEN, 14 TRUMPET

Ben has been a member of BYSO for 5 years, and is quick to share his appreciation and enthusiasm for the growth he has experienced as a musician so far. "The music is top-notch, and the conductors and staff are amazing. I have a real love for classical music now, and my musical horizons have been broadened. I've been able to attend conferences and participate in competitions that I would not have had the skill level for before joining BYSO."

Ben successfully auditioned into BYSO – BYSO's top-level orchestra – at the young age of 12 years. "I remember the first few weeks there were 'giants' all around me – I was a foot and a half shorter than all the other kids. I was mentally and physically looking up to them! I was initially intimidated, and I wasn't sure if I would fit in, but I was totally wrong – everyone welcomed me right away, and I met so many new friends. I've learned so much from being around them!"

What Ben loves the most about BYSO is that feeling of being a family. "My BYSO journey has been about the people that I've met along the way. Each year, some people graduate and leave, but new people join and I look forward to meeting and connecting with them. There's a special bond you create when you are playing with 100+ people, together as one unit. I look forward to every Sunday – even on the hardest days – because every time I leave I have a real sense of fulfillment."

**"Music is beautiful, and it's even more beautiful when you are making it with people that you love."**

# OUR SUPPORTERS

BYSO is deeply grateful to our community supporters for these gifts made between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

### \$100,000 and above

Boston University, College of Fine Arts  
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### \$50,000 to \$99,999

National Endowment for the Arts  
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*We would like to offer a special note of appreciation to Eastman Music Company and Johnson String Instrument for their partnership and support of BYSO and our students.*

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*Thank you to Newton South High School for providing space for the 19-20 BYSO season.*

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**Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras**

**Federico Cortese, Music Director**

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