



**BOSTON YOUTH  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRAS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras Appoints Keith C. Elder as President and CEO**

**BYSO alumnus returns to lead organization into its next chapter of growth**

**Boston, MA** Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO), one of the world's leading youth orchestras and music education organizations, is pleased to announce the appointment of **Keith C. Elder** as its new **President and Chief Executive Officer**. Elder assumes the role following the retirement of longtime President & CEO **Catherine Weiskel**, who recently concluded 28 years of leadership. This appointment comes after an executive search process guided by Arts Consulting Group. Elder brings more than two decades of experience in orchestral leadership, arts administration, and nonprofit governance to BYSO, most recently serving as President and CEO of the **Grand Rapids Symphony**. His appointment is especially meaningful as he returns to BYSO as an alumnus, having participated as a student with BYSO, graduating in 1988 - a full-circle moment that reflects BYSO's enduring impact on generations of young musicians.

Founded in 1958, BYSO has grown into a cornerstone of Boston's cultural and educational landscape, serving hundreds of students annually through its orchestras, programs, and educational initiatives. In 2024, the organization reached a transformative milestone with the opening of the **BYSO Youth Center for Music (YCM)** at 235 Huntington Avenue, across from Symphony Hall, its first permanent home. Elder will partner with **Music Director Federico Cortese** to guide BYSO through its next phase of growth.

*"Returning home to BYSO as President and CEO is profoundly meaningful to me," said **Keith C. Elder**. "As a former BYSO musician, I experienced firsthand the life-changing power of this organization - its commitment to artistic excellence, mentorship, and the belief that young people can achieve extraordinary things. I have watched this organization grow exponentially from my time as a student to what it is today... and it excites me to think about where we can go. I look forward to working alongside Federico, our talented staff, Board, families, and students to shape BYSO's future."*

Elder's career includes senior leadership roles at some of the nation's most respected cultural institutions, including the **Eastman School of Music, Aspen Music Festival and School, Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra**, as well as **Boston Symphony Orchestra** including **Boston Pops**, and **Tanglewood Music Center**. He holds a Bachelor of Science in music and arts administration from Indiana University and a Juris Doctor from New England School of Law.

Elder will work alongside BYSO's longtime Music Director, **Federico Cortese**, who continues to lead the organization's artistic vision and establish its reputation for ambitious programming, including BYSO's distinction as one of the only youth orchestras in the world to present a **full-length opera production annually**.

*"Keith's return to BYSO is both deeply personal and tremendously exciting," said **Federico Cortese**, Music Director of BYSO. "He understands BYSO from the inside - as a musician, as a leader, and as an advocate for young artists. His experience, values, and collaborative spirit make him an ideal partner as we continue to grow artistically and expand our impact through the Youth Center for Music and beyond."*

Elder succeeds **Catherine Weiskel**, whose 28-year tenure as President & CEO transformed BYSO through significant program expansion, financial growth, and increased access for students across Greater Boston. Over these past decades, BYSO's national and international profile has elevated tremendously while remaining deeply rooted in its educational mission.

With a strong Board of Directors, dedicated staff, and a vibrant community of students and families, BYSO enters this new chapter poised for continued excellence and innovation under Elder's leadership.

*"Keith's appointment represents both continuity and bold vision for BYSO's future," said **Margaret Chen**, Chair of the BYSO Board of Directors. "As an accomplished arts leader and alumnus, he brings a deep understanding of BYSO's mission and a unique ability to guide the organization at this pivotal moment. His history with BYSO, his love of Boston and his experience with the city's arts community are tremendous assets for our organization. It's exciting for all of us."*

### **About Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras**

Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO) is a leader in music education, serving young musicians through orchestral training, performance, and comprehensive music programs. Founded in 1958, BYSO is committed to inspiring excellence, fostering community, and empowering the next generation of musicians and leaders.

For more information, visit [www.BYSOweb.org](http://www.BYSOweb.org)