Saratoga Performing Arts Center Announces the Cancellation of its 2020 Classical Season Due to Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

SPAC to donate 2021 performance tickets to first responders and health care workers for every ticketholder that converts a minimum of $25 of their ticket cost to a tax-deductible donation

Saratoga Springs, NY (May 18, 2020)—For the first time in its 53-year history, Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) today announces the cancellation of its 2020 classical season. This includes SPAC’s summer resident companies New York City Ballet, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, as well as "Not Our First Goat Rodeo" featuring Yo-Yo Ma, and "SPAC on Stage." SPAC along with its board of directors made the decision to suspend its programming this summer in recognition of the continued threat to health and safety caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

SPAC’s 2020 classical season was set to feature seven performances and four distinct programs by New York City Ballet including Swan Lake; twelve performances by The Philadelphia Orchestra, highlighted by all nine of Beethoven’s symphonies in four consecutive days under the baton of Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and six programs by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, exploring Beethoven and his influences.

“So much thought, care, heart and soul go into crafting and preparing for our summer season that we truly think of it as a love letter to our community. To find it necessary to cancel what would have been one of the most ambitious and artistically inspiring seasons to date is just gut-wrenching and inconceivable,” said Elizabeth Sobol, SPAC’s President and CEO. “But the indisputable truth is that even with our park setting and our 5200 seats, it would be simply impossible to find a way to keep the artists and the community safe.”

“SPAC has been New York City Ballet’s summer home since 1966 and this will be the first time in more than 50 years that the Company will not be performing in the capital region, which is devastating for all of us,” said NYCB Executive Director Katherine Brown. “However, the health and safety of our artists, staff, and audiences is our number one priority at this time, and we support SPAC’s decision to cancel this summer’s performances. All of us at New York City Ballet look forward to returning to SPAC next summer to perform for the wonderful and loyal fans who come to see us each summer in one of the country’s most beautiful performing arts venues.”

“Though we are heartbroken to not perform in Saratoga this summer, the health and safety of all is of utmost importance,” said Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Matias Tarnopolsky. “Our residency at SPAC is always a highlight of our season. As we look to the future with hope and optimism, we eagerly anticipate our return to Saratoga Springs and to our many longtime friends at SPAC.”
“All year long we look forward to our annual August residency at SPAC and the joy of performing for our incredible audiences at the Spa Little Theater,” CMS Executive Director Suzanne Davison and co-Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han added in a joint statement. “We will miss terribly being with you but completely support SPAC’s decision to cancel the summer season to protect the health of our musicians and audiences while it’s not yet safe to gather together for live concerts amidst this global health crisis. We can’t wait to be back together, sharing the greatest chamber music and musicians with our beloved SPAC audience.”

Due to the impact of the coronavirus crisis, SPAC faces the loss of millions of dollars in ticket, rental and sponsorship income. As a 501(c)3 charitable organization, SPAC depends on ticket sales and the generosity of individuals and corporate underwriters for 80% of its annual budget, which includes an education program that reaches 50,000 students throughout the Capital Region every year.

“For the past 53 years, SPAC has been a beacon of hope, light and refuge for the community — and the support of the community has been critical to its life and longevity. The loss of ticket income, event sponsorships and key sources of revenue is going to hit SPAC incredibly hard. Continued community support through membership, ticket donations and philanthropic contributions will be critical to how SPAC emerges from the crisis,” added Sobol.

“That said, while our traditional season is unable to continue for 2020, SPAC leadership is committed to continuing to provide the kind of inspiring and transformative experiences for which SPAC is known and loved. Our dedication to art, artists and community is undimmed. If anything, we feel more galvanized than ever to serve as a sanctuary and cultural convener for our community during this time of uncertainty and darkness,” said Sobol.

Meanwhile, in the hope that summer 2021 will have returned to some degree of normalcy, SPAC is holding dates for the return of New York City Ballet on July 13-17, 2021; The Philadelphia Orchestra on August 4-21, 2021; and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in August 2021, exact dates TBA.

For every ticketholder of the 2020 classical season who chooses to convert all or a minimum of $25 of their ticket purchase into a tax-deductible donation, SPAC will donate two 2021 tickets to first responders and local health care workers.

Visit SPAC.org for options to donate, receive a credit, or to request a refund for SPAC performances. Ticketholders will also be contacted directly via email with their ticketing options.

Any changes to the rock, pop and country concert schedule will be made directly by Live Nation and Ticketmaster, which programs and manages those shows in addition to their related ticketing policies.

Visit https://www.livenationentertainment.com/ticketrefund/.

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**ABOUT SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER:**

The Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), located in the historic resort town of Saratoga Springs in upstate New York, is one of America’s most prestigious summer festivals. Its tranquil setting in a 2,400-acre park preserve surrounded by hiking trails,
geysers, and natural mineral springs draws vacation crowds and arts connoisseurs each year for immersive experiences of performances by resident companies New York City Ballet, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Freihofer’s Saratoga Jazz Festival, Opera Saratoga, and concerts by Live Nation. SPAC also hosts the annual Saratoga Wine and Food Festival in addition to imaginative programming such as the popular “SPAC on Stage” series and Caffè Lena @ SPAC.

SPAC is a 501c3 charitable organization. Donations and proceeds from fundraising events benefit the Center’s children’s education programs and support the vibrancy of its classical season. For more information visit spac.org.