

Dear friends,

Our hearts go out to those affected by COVID-19 and especially those who have lost loved ones this year. Not only has COVID-19 stricken down some of our friends and families, but the restrictions on social gatherings have hindered our ability to join each other in comfort or to mourn their passing. You have our deepest sympathies.

As we near the end of this very strange year, we are grateful for your continued support of the Albany Symphony Orchestra through donations and sponsorships. We have relied on your generosity and the support of COVID-19 relief programs like Georgia Council for the Arts' Resiliency Grant and the U.S. Small Business Administration's Payroll Protection Program to maintain operations. We hope that you will consider the ASO in your end of year giving plans.

The ASO Board and Staff have been working diligently to determine a path forward on how and when we will return to performing for live audiences. In the interim, we have made necessary adjustments to our operations and some plans that I am excited to share with you.

First, although we cannot gather in person to celebrate the holiday season with our annual Peppermint Pops concert, we have partnered with WALB, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, and Flint River Entertainment Complex to record a special holiday concert. Maestro Claire Fox Hillard will lead our fabulous musicians and members of Albany's heroic healthcare community to bring holiday cheer directly to you on WALB-TV. It will debut on December 5 at 7:00 PM.

Second, although we suspended our plans to hire an executive director to succeed Joëlle Fryman after she moved away in May, we are continuing our search to find the right person to fill this important role. As the economy begins to re-open, it is vital that we have an enthusiastic visionary to drive the ASO forward into an uncertain future.

Third, we will be moving out of our office spaces at 308 Flint Avenue in December. Our operations manager, LeeAnna Anglin, will instead be maintaining a virtual office space. The main phone number (229-430-8933) will remain the same, and correspondence can still be sent to our P.O. box.

This year has been difficult for performing arts organizations like the ASO, but we are eager to return to the stage with live performances. Your continued support is essential to keeping Albany's community orchestra alive, and to ensuring we can take the stage again when it is safe for us to gather in person. Please visit our website or social media sites to donate what you can—any amount helps.

We wish you comfort and peace in this holiday season.

M. Matthew Phelps
President, Albany Symphony Association