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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra Announces Safety Protocols for the Upcoming Season**

(Lincoln, Neb. – Sept. 20, 2021) Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra is eager to welcome a live audience into the concert hall for the 2021-22 season. In order to create the healthiest possible environment, the orchestra is implementing a number of safety protocols to keep musicians, audience members, staff, and crew safe.

Every musician onstage (including conductors and guest artists) will be fully vaccinated, as will the entire administrative team. Staff members will wear masks at all times while assisting audience members in the concert hall. Based on the Lancaster County COVID-19 Risk Dial, audience members may also be required to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test, and may also be required to wear masks. Distanced and masked seating will be available upon request.

LSO Executive Director Barbara Zach Lee emphasizes that the priority is to ensure that Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra musicians are able to continue performing live symphonic music, and she acknowledges that in order to do that, the orchestra must use every available tool to mitigate risk. Zach Lee compliments the orchestra members for their role in the decision-making process. "Throughout the past 18 months, our musicians have overwhelmingly demonstrated their commitment to their art form, to this orchestra, and to this community. They have participated in conversations about the innovations we undertook during the pandemic, and they were a vital part of the conversations about what safety precautions to implement going forward," Zach Lee stated.

Music Director Edward Polochick believes that he speaks for the entire orchestra when he says, "We absolutely cannot wait to be together again in the same physical space as our community of audience members. The energy that you give to the musicians onstage is such a powerful reminder of the connection that live symphonic music brings to all of us." Polochick adds that he will never take for granted the privilege of performing live music for a live audience. "The music we play this year will go directly from our hearts to yours. We are so grateful for our community, and can't wait to share this incredible season with you."

Here's a detailed look at the protocols for LSO concerts. These procedures are subject to change based on local, state, and federal guidance, and any directed health measures will supersede all other policies.

ENHANCED SAFETY SEATING ZONE

In lieu of offering concerts via streaming, LSO is implementing an "Enhanced Safety Seating Zone" in order to accommodate patrons who have concerns about their personal risk level. Effective until further notice, any ticket holder may request to be seated in this zone. Audience members in this zone are required to wear their mask at all times, and will be seated in their requested pods with a minimum of six feet of distance between each group.

PROTOCOLS BASED ON THE LANCASTER COUNTY COVID-19 RISK DIAL

The following policies will be implemented for all LSO concerts, fundraising events, and gatherings, based on the status of the Lancaster County COVID-19 Risk Dial on the Tuesday preceding the week of each event (i.e. 10-12 days prior to each concert). The Risk Dial can be found here: <https://app.lincoln.ne.gov/city/covid19/>

Green: LSO welcomes audience members to a regular seating configuration, and encourages the wearing of masks.

Yellow: LSO welcomes audience members to a regular main floor seating configuration, and requires that every audience member ages 12 and over provides proof of vaccination or proof of a negative test taken within the previous 72 hours, prior to being admitted to the venue. Audience members are encouraged to wear masks.

Orange: LSO requires that every audience member ages 12 and over provides proof of vaccination or proof of a negative test taken within the previous 72 hours, prior to being admitted to the venue. Regular main floor seating configuration will be utilized, and every patron (regardless of age) is required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth at all times while in the concert venue.

Red: Dates and times will not change, but concerts will be offered as a live stream instead of an in-person event.

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