



**BELLINGHAM**  
SYMPHONY PLAYERS  
ASSOCIATION

**BELLINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**PLAYERS ASSOCIATION**

**BSPA**

**POLICIES and PROCEDURES (pp. 2-8)**

## **BSPA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Adopted May 18, 2014

### **AUXILIARY INSTRUMENTS/EXTRA PLAYER DEFINITIONS**

#### **Auxiliary Instruments**

Auxiliary instruments are those used on occasion in the symphony, such as harp and keyboard. These players are appointed by the Music Director and are paid at a negotiated rate subject to review and approval by the BSO Board of Directors to ensure hiring falls within budgetary guidelines.

#### **Extra Players**

The Operations Manager, in consultation with the section leader and the Music Director, may hire Extra Players on an as needed basis for artistic/musical reasons including: enlarging a section for balance purposes, unusual instrumentation required by the score, enlarging a section as required by the score, and filling vacancies caused by last minute cancellations to ensure the quality of the performance in question. These players are compensated through agreed upon fees or market rates, which are subject to annual review and approval by the BSO Board of Directors. Extra Players generally attend only the dress rehearsal and the concert. The Operations Manager will consult Section Leaders when Extra Musicians are to be engaged within their section. Section Leaders will be responsible for relaying these decisions to their section as a way to clarify decisions and avoid confusion.

#### **Concertmaster Position**

The BSO Concert master will be contracted by the BSO Board and will report to the Music Director. This position will be appointed by the Music Director and the salary for this position will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the BSO board.

#### **CHAMBER ORCHESTRA** *(amended 3/10/2021)*

The Bellingham Symphony Chamber Orchestra was created with the purposes of:

- [1] performing music written for smaller orchestras and larger chamber groups.
- [2] allowing select players in the BSO a chance to be challenged by this more transparent repertoire, to receive pay for this effort, and to bring the gained experience back to the larger orchestra.
- [3] performing operatic/show repertoire that may require smaller sized orchestras to fit in a "pit".
- [4] featuring local guest artists including BSO musicians as soloists.

#### **Chamber Orchestra Membership**

Chamber Orchestra personnel are determined by audition. Existing members of the BSO are eligible to audition at the time of annual auditions. New players may audition for the Chamber Orchestra at the time of initial audition. Audition material will be chosen by the section leader of the Chamber Orchestra. If a principal position is open in the Chamber Orchestra the same policy will be followed as if a principal position is open in the full orchestra. When there is a need for a substitute player in the Chamber Orchestra, the Music Director in consultation with the section leader will fill the position, selecting from the Chamber Orchestra roster and sub list.

#### **Additionally:**

- 1) String Principals/Assistant Principals, wind, brass, and percussion in the Chamber Orchestra are those in corresponding positions in the BSO.
- 2) Chamber Orchestra string players, with the exception of the Principal and Assistant Principal of each section, will rotate from a pool of audition-approved players. Rotations are to be organized by the Principal of each section.
- 3) BSO players not currently in the Chamber Orchestra can audition for membership at the time of annual auditions,

in order to be included in this rotation pool.

4) Players that are currently members of the Chamber Orchestra will not need to audition again. The roster of players in the Chamber Orchestra is posted on the BSO website. Players who feel that they are mistakenly omitted from the list can contact their Principal.

5) Players may decline to play in the Chamber Orchestra, similar to the educational concert.

### **Compensation**

Compensation will be made to all BSO Chamber musicians at a rate that is approved by the BSO Board of Directors on an annual basis.

**Note:** For reduced orchestra arrangements during the regular season, personnel will be determined by the Music Director and the principals. The default personnel for reduced strings will be the Chamber Orchestra.

### **LEAVE REQUESTS**

Players may be granted a leave-of-absence of up to one year and retain orchestra membership. Leave of absence requests must be submitted in writing to the Operations Manager as soon as possible. A one-year leave-of-absence may be extended for a second consecutive year at the discretion of the Operations Manager, in consultation with the Music Director.

Players on leave preclude themselves from participation in any of the BSPA committees including but not limited to Bowing, Audition, Probation, and BSPA Executive Board. *(amended 5/18/2014)*

Players who leave the orchestra without an approved leave-of-absence forfeit orchestra membership and will be moved to the sub list and/or be required to re-audition, at the discretion of the Operations Manager.

The Operations Manager will communicate expected leaves/absences of players to the orchestra at the beginning of each concert cycle. *(amended 5/19/2014)*

Missing more than two assigned concert cycles in a single season constitutes a leave of absence with regard to committee participation. *(amended 10/21/2014)*

### **RESIGNATION**

An intention to resign from the BSO should be communicated to the Operations Manager in a timely manner.

### **COMMITTEES**

The standing committees of BSPA shall be Audition, Bowing, and probation. When deemed necessary, the BSPA Executive Board may create an Ad-hoc Committee to handle special business as it occurs. The Probation committee will be convened as needed per Probationary Committee policy. *(amended 5/18/2014)*

### **AUDITIONS/AUDITION COMMITTEE**

The Audition Committee will be made up of 3 elected representatives from BSPA, one appointed representative, the Music Director, and the principal player of the instrument being auditioned.

If an opening on the Audition Committee occurs due to resignations or leaves of absence, the vacated position will be filled by special election of the BSPA membership. *(5/18/2014)*

The appointed representative will be selected by the Music Director and may be from any section of the orchestra. The elected members of the committee will include one representative from each of the following orchestra sections: strings, woodwinds, and brass/percussion. These members will be elected by the general BSPA membership for 4-year terms. Elections will occur in the spring and terms will be renewable. Before a member's term can be renewed, that representative must leave the committee for one 4-year term. However, a player can be re-elected in less than 4 years if there are no other candidates to fill the position, in order to avoid a vacancy on the committee. To provide continuity, terms for the elected positions will be offset to ensure that the rotation of all three representatives does

not happen simultaneously. (*amended 5/18/14*)

In the event that the section principal also serves on the audition committee, then that principal shall appoint a member of their section to sit as section representative when auditions for their section occur. (*5/18/2014*)

1. The Music Director will appoint a new member of the audition committee for the summer of 2012, beginning with the August auditions. Following this, members will rotate off the audition committee, one at the end of each Symphony season, in the order of brass, string, woodwind and Music Director appointment. For the elected members, elections will occur at the spring BSPA meeting.
2. Standard open auditions for available permanent member positions, chamber orchestra positions, and substitute player positions will be held at least once a year, at a time agreed upon by the audition committee. Additional auditions to fill positions can be scheduled at the discretion of the Music Director.

The number of positions in the BSO will be determined in collaboration between BSPA and the Music Director, but the standard instrumentation will be:

3333/4331 timp +3, harp, piano, Strings: 16,14,12,10,8

3. The committee and all principal players who will hear auditions at the beginning of the season will have an initial separate meeting to review audition policies, the scoring system and the personnel needs for the year.
4. The audition committee will be advisory to the Music Director. The committee, after hearing the auditions, will recommend whether each auditioned player should be (a) accepted into the orchestra, (b) accepted as a sub into the orchestra, or (c) not accepted into the orchestra.
5. The principal player for each section of the orchestra provides excerpts to be performed by the applicant for that section. In addition to these excerpts, the applicant will be asked to play a 1 minute solo of their choice.
6. Auditions will be blind. The audition committee will find a volunteer proctor to sit with the auditionee in order to relay any questions the player may have for the committee so that the auditions can remain truly blind. All auditions will be blind and the method for securing absolute blindness will be addressed. Adequate time will be set aside for reviewing each auditionee.
7. A substitute musician may be granted PROVISIONAL membership in the BSO under the following conditions (*amended 5/19/2015*):
  - a. There is an opening in a BSO section
  - b. The musician in question has served as a substitute musician for at least one season or for 6 concert cycles (an equivalent of one season)
  - c. The regular auditions have been held for the following season and no acceptable candidate was chosen
  - d. A committee made up of the Music Director (Yaniv Attar), the principal player from the concerned section, and the other relevant section principals meet to determine the acceptance/non-acceptance of the musician into the vacant position
8. Principal Position Auditions:
  - The auditionee will present a resume in advance of the audition. The Music Director will review the resumes and decide if the applicants are to be accepted for audition. The Music Director may request the input of the audition committee in reviewing the resumes.
  - The selected auditionees will play their auditions to an audition committee consisting of the standard audition committee plus four principals (or their designees) of adjacent sections as invited by the Music Director.
  - The winner of the audition will play with the BSO for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 concerts before it is

decided whether they have won the position.

This decision will be made by the Music Director in consultation with principals from adjacent sections. If no auditionee is qualified to fill the position, then it will remain open.

9. An Assistant Principal player may be appointed to the Principal position under the following conditions (*amended 5/19/2015*):
  - a. The Principal player has been on leave and the Assistant Principal has been the acting Principal
  - b. The Assistant Principal has been the acting Principal for at least one season.
  - c. The Principal player resigns his/her position
  - d. The regular auditions have been held for the following season and no acceptable candidate was chosen
  - e. A committee made up of the Music Director (Yaniv Attar) and all section principals meet to decide on appointment of the Assistant Principal to the Principal position.

### **Openings in the Violin Sections:**

1. When there is an opening in either of the BSO violin sections, auditions will be held to fill the opening. If there is an opening in the First Violin Section, that position shall be announced to current BSO members so that members of the Second Violin Section who would like to move to the First Violin Section would have a chance to audition.
2. If a newcomer to the orchestra plays the best audition, that person would fill the vacancy. If a member of the Second Violin Section plays the best audition, that person would fill the First Violin Section vacancy and the newcomer who is the best of all newcomers auditioning would fill the resulting vacancy in the Second Violin Section.
3. The audition material will be selected by the Concertmaster, and will be new to all applicants. It will be handed out four weeks prior to the audition and will consist of two orchestral excerpts.
4. The Music Director and the audition committee will keep in mind that there needs to be a balance of (16) 1st violins and (14) 2nd violins when filling positions.

### **High School/Middle School Students Playing with the BSO**

It is recommended that all middle school and high school students who are members of the BSO remain a participating member of their school ensemble on their respective instrument unless their school music teacher gives them permission to participate in the BSO without playing in their school group. Exceptions will be made case by case for those whose schools do not have a musical ensemble for their respective instrument.

### **BOWING COMMITTEE**

The Concertmaster and the Principal Players of each string section will form the Bowing Committee for the purpose of preparing parts for the string sections before the first rehearsal of that repertoire. After receipt of parts from the Operations Manager and tempi from the Music Director, the Concertmaster will consult with the other Principal Players to determine bowings no later than one week prior to the first rehearsal for each concert (whenever possible given the timetable of programming and music distribution). The Concertmaster calls the Bowing Committee together as needed. The seat on this committee becomes mandatory to any musician who takes on the responsibility of a string section leader. The Bowing Committee:

- will receive parts from Operations Manager no later than two weeks before the first rehearsal of that repertoire (whenever possible)
- will receive tempi from the Music Director within one to two weeks before the first rehearsal of that repertoire (whenever possible)

- will convene no later than one week before the first rehearsal to finalize bowings for the sections, i.e. after a preceding Tuesday night rehearsal
- will provide bowed parts to the Operations Manager for disbursal to the section no later than Friday before the first rehearsal of that repertoire OR will provide bowings to section before the first rehearsal of that repertoire.

## **PROBATION COMMITTEE AND DISMISSAL POLICY PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY**

This policy governs the disciplinary procedures for musicians in the orchestra who fail to uphold musical and/or non-musical standards. This policy applies to musicians who entered the orchestra by audition and who play regularly in the orchestra. An orchestra member may be a volunteer or a principal player, but not a substitute or contract player (i.e. concertmaster, harp, keyboard, extras) who may be dismissed for cause by the Music Director.

This policy and all orchestra policies are the responsibility of the Board of Directors for ratification and enforcement because they have financial and legal implications. The executive leadership of BSPA is involved to assure that the orchestra member receives a fair review and a reasonable opportunity to improve. Confidentiality and discretion are important to the disciplinary process, for the privacy of the members involved and the artistic staff, and for the morale of the orchestra. Orchestra members and staff shall restrict all communication to those directly involved at each stage of the disciplinary action to within the hearing procedure or to consult with current or past BSPA executives.

## **PROBATION COMMITTEE**

The BSPA President will assemble the Probation Committee in the event of a hearing. The Probation Committee will consist of the BSPA President (or other BSPA officer appointed by the President) who will serve as Chair, Operations Manager (non-voting on performance hearing, voting on conduct hearings), Music Director, and three principal players. A recording secretary will be appointed from among these three players. These three principal players will be selected randomly from a hat by the chair and must (a) declare themselves to be unbiased toward the incident or member, and (b) meet with approval of the Music Director. Additional principal players will be chosen randomly until three meet these criteria. The subject member will be allowed to invite another orchestra member to serve as advocate for the member. In the case of a tie vote within the committee, an outside volunteer or paid arbitrator will be selected by full consensus of the committee and board approval. The arbitrator will review all evidence and testimony and render a binding judgment.

## **PROCEDURE**

The disciplinary procedure will begin when a musician engages in counterproductive behavior, including but not limited to the behaviors below:

1. Performance deficiencies, including but not limited to intonation, accuracy, rhythm, preparation, ensemble, or failure to respond to the conductor's direction.
2. Conduct deficiencies, including but not limited to:

Failure to comply with BSO standards, including dress code and inappropriate conduct. Inappropriate conduct includes a lack of cooperation, collaboration and teamwork with other orchestra members.

Two or more unexcused absences from rehearsals before a single concert, or a single performance.

Working under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other mind-altering substances.

Engaging in sexual harassment

## **Sanctions and or dismissal for performance deficiencies**

1. When the Music Director observes performance deficiencies with a member, the Music Director will informally counsel the musician on how to improve. If the problem is not resolved by the member in a timely manner, the Music Director will write a memorandum to the musician containing a detailed description of the deficiencies, recommendation on how to improve, a reasonable timeline for improvement, and a statement that failure to

improve may be referred to the Probation Committee. The Operations Manager will distribute this memorandum to the member and the president of BSPA, and maintain a file copy.

- a. Any orchestra member(s), concerned about perceived performance deficiencies in another member, may submit a written description of the issue to the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager will submit copies to the Music Director and the president of BSPA, and maintain a file copy. The Music Director may or may not act on this letter, at his/her discretion.
2. If the Music Director determines that the deficiency has not improved in the required time, he/she may (1) write a second memorandum to the player outlining the deficiency, required improvements and new deadline or (2) write a second memorandum to the player stating that the deficiencies have not improved and the musician will be subject to a hearing by the Probation Committee. The Operations Manager will work with the Probation Committee chair to schedule a hearing within two weeks.
3. Probation Committee will select the committee membership and recording secretary in consultation with the Music Director. At the hearing, the Probation Committee will study the prior documentation, and listen to and question presentations by the member, the member's chosen advocate, the Music Director, and others as called by the Probation Committee. At the close of the hearing, the Probation Committee will vote by secret ballot to place the member on probation or not. The Music Director will have a number of votes equal to the number of voting committee members. With a majority vote, the Probation Committee can establish a probationary period of six weeks or more, not to exceed 12 weeks, to occur during the concert season. In the case of a tie vote, an arbitrator will be enlisted to render a binding judgment. The recording secretary will document the terms of the probationary period (issues, evaluation criteria, indicators of improvement, and time period) and provide this to the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager will distribute this documentation to the member, all Probation Committee participants, and the president of the BSO board of directors. A follow-up hearing will be scheduled for the end of the probation period.

At the follow-up hearing, the Probation Committee will meet with the Music Director. The Probation Committee chairperson may request the member, the member's advocate, or other relevant orchestra personnel be in attendance. The Probation Committee will review and discuss the member's improvement concerning the terms of the probation. A secret ballot vote, as before, will determine if the player is to be retained or dismissed from the orchestra. In the case of a tie vote, an arbitrator will be enlisted to render a binding judgment. The recording secretary will submit the documentation to the Orchestra Manager for the files, and a copy to the Board of Directors. The president of the Board of Directors will immediately issue a letter containing the decision to the member, by registered mail.

If the member is retained by the orchestra and then regresses to similar deficiencies, the Music Director can request an immediate and expedited hearing and secret-ballot vote (as above) from the Probation Committee.

### **Sanctions and or dismissal for conduct deficiencies**

When the Operations Manager observes a conduct deficiency with a member, the Operations Manager will give the member a detailed written notice of the conduct deficiency with a deadline for improvement, and submit copies to the BSPA president, the Music Director, and the personnel file.

- a. If the infraction is sufficiently serious (dangerous to the health or welfare of other members or staff, involving potential legal implications, or unexcused absence from performances), the Operations Manager may refer it in writing directly to the president of the BSO board of directors for immediate action and/or dismissal. Copies will be submitted to the BSPA president, the Music Director, and the personnel file.

On the occasion of a second infraction (of the same type or unrelated), the Operations Manager will give the member a detailed written notice, advising that a third incident will be referred to the Probation Committee for a hearing and possible probation. Copies will be submitted to the BSPA president, the Music Director, and the personnel file.

3. On the third infraction (of the same type or unrelated), the Operations Manager will issue a final written notice to the member, and refer the incident to the Probation Committee. The Probation Committee will convene a hearing according to the aforementioned committee procedure to meet with the member and the Orchestra Manager, hear arguments and review the documentation, and vote by secret ballot to retain or dismiss the member. The Operations Manager will have the same number of votes as the number of committee members. Tie votes will be referred to the

president of the BSO Board of Directors for final determination. The President of the Board of Directors will issue a letter containing the decision to the member, by registered mail.

### **AMENDMENTS TO POLICIES**

These Policies and Procedures may be modified at any time by a simple majority of BSPA present and voting.

This edition of the BSPA Policies and Procedures was approved by majority vote of the membership present at its meeting on the 6th day of November, 2018.

### **BSO Board Policies**

We follow the Drug Free Workplace, Equal Opportunity, Sexual Harassment, and Whistleblower policies set by the BSO Board. Updated copies of these policies will be provided by the Operations Manager to each BSO member at the beginning of each season.