Service Learning Project – Crisis Communication Plan



Created by Autumn E. Skinner

for Public Relations Tactics- Journalism 375

Spring 2017

Professor Krista Coriaty

California State University, Long Beach

Introduction

Objective:

The objective of this crisis plan is to ease the workload for the Long Beach Symphony team in the event of a crisis. Some of the crises outlined with steps for each include: Rumors, accidents, natural disasters, misdeeds and malevolence. Every crisis does not require the same response strategy, but does require a response of some kind. The templates I have provided are easily “fill-in-the-blank” style, to change the message content based on the situation.

Goal:

To increase response time, decrease stress and upheaval in times of crisis and to be continually improved and updated as time goes on and we learn from past crises.

Key:

LBS: Long Beach Symphony

BOD: Board of Directors

LBCC: Long Beach Convention Center

Times New Roman, 12 pt. font: Standard for press releases, media statements and media alerts.

Tips:

* Every course of action includes alerting social media unless otherwise specified.
* All courses of action are in specific order of release.
* Press conferences should not be necessary for LBS, but we may be involved in one the police/ law enforcement deliver. Therefore, a media advisory would not be necessary, either. Remarks will be drafted as needed if LBS is present at a press conference.

Table of Contents

Media & social media policies…………………………………………………….……………………………………………..4

Task force/ Command center……..……………………………………………………………………………………………..5

Crisis preparedness- Rumors……………………………………………………………………………………………..………6

Crisis preparedness- Accidents…………………………………………………………………………………………………..7

Crisis preparedness- Natural disasters……………………………………………………………………………………….8

Crisis preparedness- Misdeeds…………………………………………………………………………………………….…….9

Crisis preparedness- Malevolence………………………………………………………………………………….………..10

Important contacts……………………………………………………………………………….………………………………….11

Emergency Phone Tree……………………………………………………………………….……………………………………12

Phone Script……………………………………………………………………………….……………………………………………13

Dark website recommendation…………………………………………………….………………………………………….14

Crisis Recovery Plan/ Evaluation………………………………………………………………….…………………………..15

Internal Media Policy

Anyone (board, staff, musicians) who are asked questions by a reporter should direct that reporter to the Director of Communications, Genevieve Macias.

She determines the best action and then arranges for our Executive Director or Board President to serve as spokesperson.

No reporter should be directed to the Executive Director or President unless they go through the Director of Communications as the first point of contact.

Social Media Policy

(Insert policy here)

Crisis Task Force

**Kelly Lucera**- Executive Director *(MAIN spokesperson)*

**Irv Miller**- Board President *(Backup spokesperson/ Handling BOD communications)*

**Genevieve Macias**- Director of Communications *(Fielding media calls and distributing internal/external communications)*

**Ben Rubinstein**- Development Associate *(Responding to internal communications)*

**Robb Belmontez**- Marketing and Systems Manager *(Handles all social media communications)*

All employees must contact Genevieve Macias first when a crisis is unfolding or if Mrs. Macias/ LBS is not already aware of the crisis. For what constitutes a crisis, ask Mrs. Macias when in doubt.

Command Center

In the event of a crisis, it is easier to have in-person communication with your team so as to not be calling, texting and emailing back and forth. If it is possible, meet with your task force in-person at the most convenient location for everyone. These are suggestions in the event that the Long Beach Symphony offices are not accessible:

* The Long Beach Public Library

101 Pacific Ave, Long Beach, CA 90802

HOURS: Sun/Mon- closed

Tues/Thurs- 12-8 p.m.

Wed- 12-6 p.m.

Fri/Sat- 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

* Hyatt Regency Long Beach

200 S Pine Ave, Long Beach, CA 90802 | Available 24/7

(Insert command center alternatives/ personal addresses here)

Crisis Preparedness: RUMORS

Fraternization: The definition of fraternization in the workplace varies, however it is commonly thought of as a superior engaging in a romantic or inappropriate way toward a subordinate. The consequences could be if that subordinate gets a promotion, it is preferential treatment, or worse if the subordinate claims sexual harassment.

Sexual Assault: Including harassment, rape, unwanted sexual advances, spoken sexual harassment, etc.

Donation Spending: Donations being funneled into a personal account or misspent by LBS employees

COURSE OF ACTION:

If rumors persist and attract media attention:

* Media statement only, no social media

Crisis Preparedness: ACCIDENTS

Severe Injury:

-Caused by LBS: Loose railing, causing a fall. Slippery floor with no wet floor sign, etc.

-Not caused by LBS: A trip and fall down stairs, a tumble over the railing, etc.

Death:

-Caused by LBS: From injury, see above. From illness, see below.

-Not caused by LBS: Heart-attack, stroke, choking, etc.

Illness:

-Caused by LBS: Catering food or drink cross-contamination or past expiration, etc. Food-borne illness, air-borne sickness from unwell staff.

-Not caused by LBS: Any illness not associated with a staff member’s negligence or LBS fault but results in urgent hospitalization of a guest.

Fire: Kitchen, bar, bathroom, etc. Caused, or not caused by LBS.

COURSE OF ACTION:

* Death: Media statement, press release. Social media update only if shows need to be cancelled for any reason.
* Severe Injury: Media statement. Social media update only if shows need to be cancelled, i.e. injury of musicians without replacements/ injury of conductor.
* Severe Illness: Caused by LBS: Media statement, no social media.

Crisis Preparedness: NATURAL DISASTERS

Flood: Due to LBS location, this is a very real threat and may require sudden closing, show cancellations and expensive damage repairs

Earthquake: Due to this being California’s greatest natural threat, a large magnitude earthquake may require closing, show cancellations and expensive damage repairs

COURSE OF ACTION:

* Media Statement
* Press Release
* Media Alert for re-opening if closed for over four weeks or LBS creates grand event out of re-opening.

Crisis Preparedness: MISDEEDS (internal)

Fraternization: The definition of fraternization in the workplace varies, however it is commonly thought of as a superior engaging in a romantic or inappropriate way toward a subordinate. The consequences could be if that subordinate gets a promotion, it is preferential treatment, or worse if the subordinate claims sexual harassment.

Assault/ Sexual Assault: Including harassment, rape, unwanted sexual advances, spoken sexual harassment, etc.

Vandalism/Property Destruction: Building exterior/interior. Instruments, property. Fire, etc.

Donation Spending: Donations being funneled into a personal account or misspent by LBS employees

Death: Death of executive, musician or board member

Murder/Suicide: Murder *of* AND/OR *by* executive, musician or board member

Injury: Injury *of* AND/OR *by* executive, musician or board member

COURSE OF ACTION:

* Assault/Sexual Assault: Media statement, press release\*, no social media

\*Depending on severity of claims or actual malice, and again if a lawsuit is filed or law enforcement is involved.

* Vandalism/Property Destruction/Donation spending: Media statement, press release\*, social media only if shows must be cancelled.

\*Depending on severity, if shows must be cancelled or damages are high in cost.

* Death: Media statement, press release, no social media.
* Murder/Suicide/Injury: Media statement, press release, social media\* \*Use discretion

Crisis Preparedness: MALEVOLENCE (external)

Vandalism: Not toward any race, religion, sexual orientation

Targeted Vandalism: Targeting a specific race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

Property Destruction: Windows/building exterior. Interior instruments, property, fire, etc.

Hacking: Website, social media, etc.

Gun/Bomb Threat: Call, suspicious package/behavior, actual gun or bomb threat

COURSE OF ACTION:

* Vandalism: Media statement only if local media covers it.
* Targeted Vandalism: Media statement
* Property Destruction: Media statement, press release
* Hacking: Social media and website update only
* Gun/Bomb Threat:

Fears founded- Media statement and press release.

Fears not founded- Media statement and periodic social media updates.

Important Contacts

Long Beach Fire Department Station 1: (562) 570-2500

Long Beach Police Station: (562) 435-6711

PlushCare Urgent Care Center: (562) 392-8980

St. Mary Medical Center: (562) 491-9000

Long Beach Press Telegram contact- Richard Guzman: (insert phone number/email)

Grunion Gazette contact- Harry Saltzgaver: (insert phone number/email)

Long Beach Post: (562) 437-5814

Los Angeles Times: Ruben Vives (Long Beach city editor) ruben.vives@latimes.com

Orange County Register: Jim Radcliffe (Senior editor for breaking news)  jradcliffe@ocregister.com (714) 796-7985 | General news tip: local@ocregister.com or (714) 796-7984

Executive Contacts

**Kelly Lucera**- Executive Director *(MAIN Spokesperson)*

(562) 436-3203 | (Insert Email)

**Dana Ramos**- Director of Finance

(562) 436-3203 ext. 236 | DRamos@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Peggy Magee-** Director of Artistic Operations

(562) 436-3203 ext. 222 | PMagee@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Issy Roberts**- Manager of Operations and Education *(2nd Spokesperson)*

(562) 436-3203 ext. 228 | IRoberts@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Carrie Holzman-Little**- Orchestra Personnel Manager

(Insert Phone Number) | CHolzmanLittle@LongBeachSymphony.org

(continued)

**Marty Fenton Frear**- Librarian

(562) 436-3203 ext. 231 | MFrear@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Genevieve Macias**- Director of Development and Communications

(562) 436-3203 ext. 226 | GMacias@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Robb Belmontez**- Marketing and Systems Manager

(562) 436-3203 ext. 227 | RBelmontez@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Ben Rubinstein**- Development Associate

(562) 436-3203 ext. 229 | BRubinstein@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Florita Davis**- Manager of Sales

(562) 436-3203 ext. 232 | FDavis@LongBeachSymphony.org

**Katrena Rainey**- Office Administrator and Finance Assistant

(562) 436-3203 ext. 220 | KRainey@LongBeachSymphony.org

Emergency Phone/Email Tree

Genevieve Macias

In case of emergency I can be reached at:

(Insert Cell Phone Number/Personal Email)

Robb Belmontez

(Insert Cell Phone Number/ Personal Email)

Irv Miller

(Insert Cell Phone Number/ Personal Email)

Kelly Lucera

(Insert Cell Phone Number/ Personal Email)

Long Beach Press Telegram Contact

(Insert Cell Phone Number)

Administrative Staff

(Insert Cell Phone Numbers/ Personal Emails)

Executive Committee Board Members

(Insert Cell Phone Numbers/ Personal Emails)

Insert more as necessary, changing hierarchy as needed.

General Phone Script

FOR ALL:

Answer WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN WHY if information is known. For anything you do not know: “We do not yet know the information you are seeking but we can get back to you with the answer as soon as possible if you provide us an email or phone number.”

RUMORS: How do we know for sure (X) is not true? “We have the highest of standards at LBS and would not tolerate the actions rumored to be happening here.”

Is there any proof? “The facts can be provided to you by email (or are available on our website under X tab)”

ACCIDENTS: How could LBS be so careless? “LBS has the highest of standards and as soon as a problem is found, it is fixed. Unfortunately, in this situation (X) found a problem before we did and we deeply apologize (X) happened. The safeguards we will be instilling as preventative measures now are (XYZ) or (will be provided to the media X time/day/asap) or (are available on our website).”

How do you know LBS is not at fault? “After careful review, legal and internally, LBS was not found at fault for (X) due to (X) evidence. A full report/brief/etc. can be forward to you if you provide an email address.”

NATURAL DISASTERS: How was the symphony hit so hard when surrounding businesses are fine? (a.k.a.- was the building not structurally sound?) “I have to direct your question to The LBCC which can be reached at (562) 436-3636 because we are housed in their building. I can assure you though, that the building had structural updates as recently as (X date) and safety is our highest priority.”

MISDEEDS: (This one will have to be very customized depending on the situation.) Why weren’t there safeguards in place BEFORE something like this happens? “The policies we had in place before did not account for someone doing (X)/ had not been updated in (X) time/ we did not anticipate someone finding a loophole in the safeguards designed by top legal professionals/ etc.” Does the LBS condone sexism/fraternization/sexual harassment? “No, LBS has a strict (X) policy and (X) has since been terminated. We are also having a (X harassment) in the workplace meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page in understanding the rules.”

MALEVOLENCE: What kind of security does LBS have that allowed (X) event? “LBS’s highest priority is guest and employee safety. The LBCC is equipped with security cameras, (X), (X) and (X). Unfortunately, (X) went undetected due to (X), and we are looking for a way to increase security to prevent that from happening again.”

Dark Website Recommendation

The first place most people go to for news on an organization’s crisis or a big event is their website. Social media is the second place. A dark website is a ready-made parallel version of the actual website, but updated with important information in the event of a crisis.

The downsides to not having a dark website is losing time. Taking time to create the content and craft the right messages in the event of a crisis eats up time, and to the public, the longer an organization takes to respond, the worse it looks. It looks bad on the organization, but it can also implicate the organization, it can worry shareholders, it can create rumors and media can be pitted against you, and so on.

The upside is clear, as the military says: ABP — Always Be Prepared. It saves time in a worst-case scenario, it is optically positive for the organization, media and stakeholders and it keeps stress levels down in an otherwise stressful situation.

The copy for a Dark Website will be different depending on the crisis. Use templated media statements and press releases for a guide, and remember to always provide social media links so people do not have to keep going back to the website for crisis updates.

It is a general recommendation to activate a dark website as soon as possible, especially so the media may direct the public to the website for more information.

Crisis Recovery Plan & Evaluation

Activation Criteria:

Anyone can activate the crisis task force by alerting Genevieve Macias first via phone or email, preferably phone, which activates the emergency phone tree.

Procedures:

1. Activate crisis task force by calling Mrs. Macias. If Mrs. Macias is activating, she calls the first two contacts from the phone tree, and they call the next three and so on. She will email and leave a voicemail (or personal email, if internal email is not accessible) for the administrative staff and executive board of directors to alert them of the situation.
2. Steps for the order in which pieces of information are released when are available in each crisis outline section. **Social media normally should be first to be updated, even if it is just to say an update is on the way.**
3. Key Stakeholders: Administrative staff, Board of Directors, concert guests, sponsors and donors.
* Email updates may be necessary for concert guests
* In legal cases, donors may need to be especially communicated to. Make sure every piece of communication is in writing with timestamps/dates.
* Sponsors need only be notified independently if there is a crisis implicating LBS that would affect their sponsorship.
1. Checklist/ post-crisis communication:
* Were all affected stakeholders notified in a timely manner?
* Was website/social media updated within 24 hours?
* If there were any hiccups in communication, be sure to revise crisis plan for next time.
* Did staff know what to say/do and who to contact/how?
* Did the media get the right information, fast?
* Monitor website/social media traffic and ticket sales to make sure reputation/sales have not taken a hit three to six months later.
* Add more evaluation measures as deemed necessary

[News release templates, media statement templates and social media drafts attached]



**249 E. Ocean Blvd., Suite 200
Long Beach, CA 90802**

 For information contact: Genevieve Macias

 GMacias@LongBeachSymphony.org

 (562) 436-3203

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(or embargo date & time)

***(ACCIDENTS TEMPLATE)***

**headline- (Death of a concert-goer, LBS at fault)**

***Optional Subhead — Centered, Initial Caps (Title Case), Italic***

**LONG BEACH, Calif. – Jan. 1, 2017 –** Last (date) a concert guest, (name), died suddenly at (time of death) (during /concert name/ or at /hospital name/) due to (illness/injury) caused by (X event/fault).

(Quote from Kelly Lucera) “We are deeply saddened by (use actual name)’s passing and our condolences go out to their family and friends.”

The Long Beach Symphony Association is investigating the cause of death as an accident — rest assured any party found at fault will not go without disciplinary action and possible legal action.

(Provide details on exact cause of death, i.e. the railing \_X\_ fell over was installed last month (no company names until later if necessary) while renovations were being made to X concert hall.)

-I.E. The food served at X event/concert was prepared by X catering/establishment. (Salmonella/ E. coli/ etc.)

We will be providing details to the media as soon as they are provided to us.

-more-

**About Long Beach Symphony Association:**

Founded in 1935 as a permanent and professional symphonic orchestra, the Long Beach Symphony Association has enjoyed consistent, generous, and enthusiastic support from individuals and businesses throughout the community. Serving as one of the major cultural institutions in the city, Long Beach Symphony has also benefited from a successful and storied past, including being the first regional orchestra to appoint a female music director in 1989 – JoAnn Falletta, who will lead the orchestra as guest conductor on June 10, 2017.

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***(MALEVOLENCE TEMPLATE)***

**Headline — eX. — Vandalism COVERS FACE OF SYMPHONY BUILDING — TAGGING, THEFT AND BROKEN WINDOWS**

***Optional Subhead — Centered, Initial Caps (Title Case), Italic***

**LONG BEACH, Calif. – Jan. 1, 2017 –** This (morning, date, etc.) (X vandalism) was discovered by (title, i.e. sanitation worker, staff, etc.) at (general location).

Due to the severity of damage, (tonight/today’s/etc.) concert (name and time) must be postponed (until date/time or further notice).

The Long Beach Performing Arts Center is working with local police on this case of vandalism and we deeply apologize to our guests who may have been inconvenienced by this.

Provide details if available/appropriate on the vandalism, if this is not the first, if it is becoming more common in the area, etc.

Provide details about vandal’s clothing/appearance if seen on security footage.

Anyone with any information that may aid in this case may direct their concerns to (detective name). (He/She) can be reached at The Long Beach Police Department directly at (#).

-more-

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(or embargo date & time)

***(MISDEEDS TEMPLATE)***

**Headline — I.E. (Exec/Board of director/etc.) Found guilty of LBS unauthorized donation spending**

***Optional Subhead — Centered, Initial Caps (Title Case), Italic***

**LONG BEACH, Calif. – Jan. 1, 2017 –** (Title) (name) was found guilty\* by the (Los Angeles County Court, etc.) (this time of day) of unauthorized personal use of Long Beach Symphony donation funds.

Some of (X)’s uses of the LBS donation account included (limousine/casino/flights/escorts/etc.).

(X) has since been terminated/banned from (LBS/ board of directors/ external associations).

“Provide details on how this was found out/ by who (like accounting department or manager) in form of spokesperson quote.”

Detail timeline of misuse, changes that will be made to ensure this will not happen again.

We are appalled to find out one of our (executives/ board members/ etc.) was using our nonprofit donations as their own personal piggy bank.

The safeguards that will be instated will prevent this from happening again. The trust of our generous donors is our number one priority for our organization’s transparency.

-more-

We appreciate their continued support as we hold X accountable (in court/during this lawsuit/legal action) for all misspent funds and assure the community these donations will return to their rightful uses.

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\*Use “found guilty” if they were tried in court. If it is legally unofficial, use “involved in,” “incriminated in,” “implicated in,” etc.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(or embargo date & time)

***(NATURAL DISASTER TEMPLATE)***

**Headline — EX.— flood waters rise to 10 inches, shut down Long beach symphony for (time appx or unknown amount of time)**

***Optional Subhead — Centered, Initial Caps (Title Case), Italic***

**LONG BEACH, Calif. – Jan. 1, 2017 –** This week (or date, or day, etc.) (heavy rainfall/ a \_\_ magnitude earthquake) prompted the immediate shut down of the Long Beach Symphony due to safety concerns being located at the edge of the coast.

“Quote from Kelly Lucera on property damage extent.”

All ticket sales will be refunded through the next (\_X\_) (weeks/days). Property damage and reconstruction pending, the Long Beach Symphony expects to be open again (date or approx. date). Updates will be provided to our concert email subscribers, and to the media when the re-opening is official.

Quote from Kelly Lucera on re-opening if it will be over a month: “We are striving to bring the symphony back to Long Beach as soon as possible. Rest assured, our re-opening will be grand, we appreciate our customer’s patience and anticipate our return to the (season) concert series!”

-more-

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###

Social Media Post Drafts

Facebook/Twitter

**~~RUMORS~~**

**ACCIDENTS** — Shows Cancelled due to Death or Injury: “This (X) is unfortunately cancelled due to the death of our beloved (X)/ fellow (X). Updates or refunds will be provided to ticketholders on postponed concert date and time.”

Short detail of WHY/explanation or about deceased employee.

“This (X) is unfortunately cancelled due to the death of a concert guest. Updates or refunds will be provided to ticketholders on postponed concert date and time.”

**NATURAL DISASTERS** — Shows Cancelled: Photo of damage, caption: “This (X) is unfortunately cancelled due to severe damage sustained from (today’s/yesterday’s/etc.) (storm/earthquake/etc.). Updates or refunds will be provided to ticketholders on postponed concert date and time.”

MISDEEDS/MALEVOLENCE — Shows Cancelled due to Property Damage/Vandalism: Photo of damage, caption: “This (X) is unfortunately cancelled due to severe property damage from vandalism. Updates or refunds will be provided to ticketholders on postponed concert date and time.”

**MALEVOLENCE** — Gun/Bomb Threat: “At (X) time today there was a (X) threat called into LBCC which prompted the evacuation of all staff and guests.” Provide updates, provide a statement saying no one was harmed, or if someone is, indicate number of people killed/injured, NO names, provide details on if anything was found, if it was a hoax, etc. If law enforcement is involved, ask before releasing details to public on incident.

Instagram:

**~~RUMORS ACCIDENTS MALEVOLENCE~~**

**NATURAL DISASTERS** — See above

**MISDEEDS/MALEVOLENCE** — See above

MEDIA STATEMENT

ACCIDENTS — DEATH OF AN LBS EMPLOYEE

Date, time:

Last (date) (name) died suddenly at (concert) due to (illness/medical condition/injury) at (time of death).

We are deeply saddened by (name)’s passing and our condolences go out to their family and friends. (Name) will be sorely missed by all at the Long Beach Symphony and community.

The details of (his/her) memorial service will be posted on our social media and website.

Provide details if necessary about cause of death, i.e.- she was diagnosed with cancer seven years ago/ he had a stroke two months ago, etc.

Provide Twitter handle @LBSymphony

Provide website: LongBeachSymphony.org

MEDIA STATEMENT

MALEVOLENCE — TARGETED (RACIST) TAGGING/VANDALISM

Date, time:

Last/ This (date/time of day) (name) a (racial slur/ racist symbol) was discovered (location), vandalizing the Long Beach Performing Arts Center.

The Long Beach Symphony does not condone any kind of hate speech and we are working fast to remove the vandalism from our property.

The Symphony is an inclusive environment with a diverse audience and we strive to provide a peaceful experience for our guests and employees.

Police are investigating this matter as an act of vandalism.

Please call (detective on case) at (#) if you have any information that may help in this case’s resolution.

MEDIA STATEMENT

MISDEEDS — MURDER *BY* EXEC/BOARD DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR/ETC.

Date, time:

(Title) (name) was arrested today at (time) for the murder of (X)\*.

We at The Long Beach Symphony Association are all extremely upset to hear of such a malevolent, senseless act of violence and our condolences go out to (X)’s friends and family.

The symphony asks that the media respect the victim’s family’s privacy during their time of crisis.

Local law enforcement (Long Beach Police Department or other department) will be handling this case; as such, further media inquiries should be directed to (police department spokesperson/ homicide head detective/ etc.) at (phone number).

Otherwise, please direct any Long Beach Symphony related media inquiries to Genevieve Macias, director of development and communication. She can be reached at (562) 436-3203 ext. 226 or by email at GMacias@LongBeachSymphony.org

**\*Remember: names cannot be reported until next-of-kin has been notified**

MEDIA STATEMENT

-NATURAL DISASTER-

Date, time:

This (date) (heavy rainfall/ \_\_ magnitude earthquake) prompted the Long Beach Symphony to cancel today’s (X) show due to safety concerns.

All ticket sales will be refunded and subscribers and ticket-buying guests will be updated via email on the symphony’s re-opening as the scope of damages is investigated. The public will be updated via our Twitter as well.

As of now, (only today/ only this week/ the rest of the month)’s shows are postponed (indefinitely/ until further notice/ until next month/ etc.).

Please direct any questions not answered on our website and social media to Genevieve Macias, director of development and communication. She can be reached at (562) 436-3023 ext. 226 or by email at GMacias@LongBeachSymphony.org

Provide details if available on scope of damages (i.e. flood water levels, foundation cracks, etc.)

Provide Twitter handle @LBSymphony

MEDIA STATEMENT

-RUMORS-

Date, time:

The persistence of (some/a) rumor(s) that has led the symphony to provide a statement to provide certainty that there is no truth or substantiality in (X) rumor.

The Long Beach Symphony Association takes these claims very seriously if evidence is found to the contrary, but the specific assertions of (X rumor/s) are unfounded.

The symphony always has its guest’s and employee’s safety, privacy and satisfaction first as our priorities.

Please direct further media inquiries to Genevieve Macias, director of development and communication. She can be reached at (562) 436-3203 ext. 226 or by email at GMacias@LongBeachSymphony.org