

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: February 15, 2012

SUBJECT: Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra Presentation

PRESENTER: Donna Hastie

ATTACHMENTS: Yes

1. Benefits of Music to the Community
2. Why Music is Important to our Youth

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Donna Hastie, President of the Board of Directors for the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra, will be present to report on the Symphony's 40th Anniversary Celebration season. The Board is also requested to join the Orchestra in supporting the 40th Anniversary Season, and consider a donation in the amount of \$20,000 to support this special season.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is requested to hear the presentation and request, and to direct Staff accordingly.

Suggested Motion:

No motion suggested.

HENDERSONVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Benefits of Music to the Community

Overview, Rev. 4, January 2012

Mission: To enrich the Hendersonville community with live symphonic performances and instrumental music education for youth and adults

Values: We value our strong community roots and will always strive to maintain our “Home Town” identity and provide affordable entertainment for our patrons while continuing to improve the quality of our programs and performances.

We value the professionalism of our Musicians and will always strive to provide a vehicle for them to strengthen their skills and share their talents with the community

We value the generosity of our sponsors, patrons and donors and will strive to maximize the effectiveness of the resources they provide to us.

We value the volunteers on our various committees, boards and support organizations and will make every effort to effectively and efficiently utilize the time, talent and treasure they share with us.

We value the efforts of our staff who though few in number work tirelessly, often behind the scenes, to ensure our success.

We value the opportunity we have to work with the young musicians in our community and take seriously our responsibility to work with them and the schools to further their musical education.

Programs and Services:

Live Symphonic Performances

- Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra - 5 concert season, 2 school concerts
- Hendersonville Symphony Youth Orchestra – 4 concert season
- Sinfonietta String Orchestra – 3 concert season

Instrumental Music Education

- Pre-classical concert reviews
- 3rd and 6th grade concerts
- Young artist competition
- Summer strings camp
- Scholarship program

Benefits to the Community

The Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra (HSO) celebrates its 40th anniversary during the 2011-2012 season. Given the talent level of its musicians and the quality of its concerts, the HSO is a tremendous cultural asset for our community. Its five performances per season range from classical performances to pops and holiday music featuring a variety of guest artists.

The HSO helps define who we are as a community. Its musical, educational, and outreach efforts help to make the Henderson County area an attractive place to live with a thriving cultural environment. Since many residents who relocate to our area are symphony music lovers, realtors

often tell us that they are frequently asked if Hendersonville has a symphony orchestra. Concert attendance averages 600 with record attendances up to 1200.

The exact economic impact of the HSO is difficult to define, but it certainly extends far beyond its concerts; for example, dining locally before or after a concert which measurably helps the community and using the Blue Ridge Community College conference hall, which provides the HSO with a professional venue and helps the college pay for the facility. HSO performances reach an audience of over 4,000 each year. Additionally, musicians and volunteers from more than 300 households are involved in presenting events for the community. Further, the HSO uses 60-70 talented musicians for each concert performance and many of them also play in the Asheville, Greenville, and Brevard Symphony Orchestras.

Data show that high earnings are not just associated with people who have high technical skills. Mastery of the arts and humanities is just as closely correlated with high earnings and this will continue to be true. (Source: Choices or Tough Times: The report of the new Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2007)

National scientific studies have shown there are many carry-over skills into other areas from studying music. Whether adult or youth, music students have been shown to have better self-esteem, to be more cooperative, to be better able to express ideas, and to increase their problem-solving, critical thinking skills, and memory.

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee said: “When I hear people asking how we fix the education system, I tell them not to cut music programs. Ask a CEO what they are looking for in an employee, and they say they need people who understand teamwork, people who are disciplined, and people who understand the big picture. They need musicians!”

The HSO helps to enrich the lives of our area residents through its community-outreach programs. This includes an opportunity to attend discussions of the classical symphonic music concerts led by the Music Director, Dr. Thomas Joiner, and educational programs presented by the Hendersonville Symphony League. Examples of such educational programs are lectures to League members and friends by Dr. Thomas Joiner and by Dr. Kevin Ayesh of the Blue Ridge Community College. In addition, members of the HSO, the Board of Directors, the League, and the HSO Education Committee conduct informational programs for other local organizations.

The HSO presents two concerts each year at the Blue Ridge Community College for third and sixth graders from all Henderson county schools, including home-schooled children and for the students’ parents. The HSO and Henderson County Public Schools collaborate to incorporate elements of the state’s academic curriculum into the accompanying materials distributed to students in preparation for the concerts. These concerts expose young audiences and their parents to live symphonic music through a concert geared specifically for them. One goal of the concerts is to inspire children to get involved as participants in music. These activities, combined with the experience of a live, full orchestra performance, nourish students’ artistic development at an age when they are highly receptive to such influences. The concerts are presented free to over 2,000 children annually and often represent the first time many of these children are exposed to classical symphonic music. The HSO spends about 15% of its total budget to help fund these youth programs.

Through the school concerts, the HSO works closely with local school music staffs and the county Board of Education to educate and nourish in county youth an appreciation and perhaps love for quality classical orchestral music and a desire and opportunity to perform such music.

“The life of the arts, far from being an interruption or a distraction in the life of the nation, is close to the center of a nation’s purpose – and is a test to the quality of a nation’s civilization.”
(Quote: President John F. Kennedy)

Benefits to the Youth in our Community

The Hendersonville Youth Symphony Orchestra (HYSO), which has been in existence for 29 years, encourages young musicians to continue fostering their interest and skills in symphonic music. Through the Youth Orchestra and 3rd and 6th grade concerts by the HSO, which all county students in those grades attend, the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra youth programs annually affect 2,000 children from Henderson and surrounding counties. Additionally, there is a yearly Young Artist Competition open to music students in grades 9-12 from Henderson and surrounding counties. The top three participants receive a cash prize, and the winner receives a chance to perform as a soloist at a scheduled HSO concert. The HSYO also offers scholarships enabling students to take private music lessons and purchase or rent instruments.

The HSYO Sinfonietta String Orchestra, which began its first season in 2010, is the creation of the HSO Education Committee, which oversees youth activities for the Symphony Board of Directors. The Sinfonietta provides a wonderful supplementary ensemble experience for students whether their training has been in a private studio or a school classroom. It performs grades 3-5 string orchestra literature. Their concerts consist of the annual Winter Concert in December, the annual Celebrating Music in Our Schools Concert in March and the Spring Concert in May. Students with two years experience on their stringed instrument and up to age 16 are invited to participate.

“Every student in the nation should have an education in the arts.” This is the opening statement of *“The Value and Quality of Arts Education: A Statement of Principles,”* a document from the nation’s ten most important educational organizations, including the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, and the National School Boards Association. However, because of the harsh reality of limited time and funding for instruction, the inclusion of the arts in every student’s education is sometimes relegated to a distant wish rather than an exciting reality. Thus, the HSYO helps to fulfill the important goal of helping to educate children in the arts.

In addition to the specifics above on how the HSO and HSYO directly help our community, what follows is some information relating to how music study and exposure helps to improve a student’s performance. For example, it has been shown that piano keyboard study improves math skills. In a study, 237 second grade students scored 27% higher on proportional math and fraction tests as a result of piano keyboard training.

Here are some of the benefits of music study:

- Improves spatial reasoning
- Improves flexibility of thought
- Builds abstract reasoning skills
- Develops good work habits

(Source: The College Board)

Schools with music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than do those without such programs – 90.2% as compared to 72.9%. Schools that have music programs have significantly higher attendance rates than do those without such programs – 93.3% as compared to 84.0%. (Source: Harris Interactive poll of high school principals, 2006)

Regardless of the socioeconomic level of the school or school district, students in high-quality school music programs score higher on standardized tests compared to students in schools with deficient music education programs. Students in top-quality music programs scored 22% better in English and 20% better in math than students in deficient music programs. (Source: Christopher M. Johnson and Jenny E. Memmott, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 2006).

According to reports by the College Entrance Examination Board, students of music continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT. For example, in 2006, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 43 points higher on the math portions than students with no coursework or experience in the arts. Scores for those with coursework in music appreciation were 62 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math portion. (Source: The College Board, *Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2006*).

Nearly 100% of past winners in the prestigious Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science and Technology (for high school students) play one or more musical instruments. This led the Siemens Foundation to host a recital at Carnegie Hall in 2004 featuring some of these young people, after which a panel of experts debated the nature of the apparent science/music link. (Source: *The Midland Chemist (American Chemical Society)* vo. 42, No. 1, Feb. 2005)

Secondary students who participated in orchestras reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs). (Source: Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Report)

Learning music in school contributes to student achievement in four important categories:

- Success in society
- Success in school and learning
- Success in developing intelligence
- Success in life

(Source: The National Association for Music Education)

We value the opportunity to offer a learning experience to elementary and middle school levels using both the seeing and hearing of quality live symphonic music. No live symphonic experience is available through the standard school music curriculum.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf said, “What a tragedy it would be if we lived in a world where music was not taught to children.”

Why Music is Important to our Youth

We have many programs in our local community that provide services to our youth after they have experienced a problem. However, the programs for preventing problems are not as plentiful. Music is one of the most successful “preventative” programs available. There are many well-documented benefits to youth who participate in music.

Ideally we all want our children to experience “success” throughout life. By participating in music children develop self-expression, which in turn leads to self-esteem – ultimately helping to succeed at life’s challenges. This sounds like a good cause for making music an integral part of every child’s education. However, when economic cuts are made to school programs, it is usually the arts/music programs that are cut first. The Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra’s (HSO) Board of Directors feels strongly that the benefits of youth music education are critically important. For this reason they provide 16% of their total budget each year to support these important programs. This is far higher than the 4% to 6% average that most orchestras provide for youth music education programs.

The programs that help our youth are the Hendersonville Symphony Youth Orchestras (HYSO) which includes the Youth Orchestra, students from 8th grade to age 21, and Sinfonietta, composed of string players not yet ready for the Youth Symphony. The Sinfonietta orchestra provides a springboard to the Youth Symphony. Young musicians from over five counties participate in the two orchestras. Additionally, there is a yearly Young Artist Competition open to accomplished music students in grades 9-12 from Henderson and twelve other surrounding counties. The top three participants receive a cash prize, and the winner performs as the guest soloist at a scheduled HSO concert. The Summer Strings Camp provides a one week program for string students aged 10 and older who have had at least one year of experience on their instrument. The HSO also offers scholarships enabling students to take private music lessons and purchase or rent instruments.

HSO and the Henderson County Board of Education offer all third and sixth grade students in the county, be they public, private or home schooled, the opportunity to experience the live sounds of a symphony orchestra each year. For many third graders this is their first opportunity to hear symphonic music. The concerts have provided the impetus for many students to consider playing a musical instrument.

Parents find that music lessons not only improve their children's memorization and small motor skills, but strongly contribute to the building of their child's self-confidence. This in turn helps children succeed not only in music, but in school and other outside activities. Both children and their parents find it truly rewarding when a child reaches a pre-set goal or milestone; whether that is learning new music, performing in front of others, or just finding enjoyment in music. The benefits of music for youth are many, and the following are among the most important.

- The College Entrance Examination Board found that students in music appreciation scored 63 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on math than students with no arts participation.
- The skills gained through sequential music instruction, including discipline and the ability to analyze, solve problems, critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, teamwork, confidence and work cooperatively, are vital for success in the 21st century workplace.

- Music majors are the most likely group of college graduates to be admitted to medical school.
- The foremost technical designers and engineers in Silicon Valley are almost all practicing musicians.
- Music Education keeps children engaged in school and less likely to drop out while helping them achieve in other academic subjects like math, science, and reading.
- Students who participate in school band or orchestra have the lowest levels of current and lifelong use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs among any group in our society.
- The vast majority—96 percent—of the school principals interviewed in a recent study agree that participation in music education encourages and motivates students to stay in school. Further, 89 percent of principals feel that a high-quality music-education program contributes to their school achieving higher graduation rates. 85% believe participation in school music corresponds with better grades and higher test scores
- With music in schools, students connect to each other better—greater camaraderie, fewer fights, less racism, and reduced use of hurtful sarcasm.
- A study of rural and urban inner-city schools found arts programs helped schools in economically disadvantaged communities develop the students' critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Helps communities share ideas and values among cultures and generations

Music is a powerful tool and as discussed above can dramatically improve and enrich children. It makes sense to encourage music education and to allow young generations to gain these wonderful benefits – higher intelligence through increased creative thinking, problem solving, a higher perception of life including better attitudes, strong desires to achieve, and higher self-esteem, better developed discipline, study skills, concentration, communication and team skills.

Donna J. Hastie
 President, Board of Directors
 Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra