The instruments of change for the next 100 years

VISION

Forward

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VIRGINIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
A TRANSFORMATIVE PRESENCE

After nearly 100 years in existence, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra today stands tall in its achievements: a near-century of transformative musical performances; a cultural asset, educator and source of pride connecting the Hampton Roads region; and a compelling draw for audiences of live symphonic music, skilled musicians and conductors.

Through the years, the VSO has also committed to making its music widely accessible. In most cities fortunate enough to have a professional orchestra, to see the symphony you must go to the symphony.

The VSO has insisted on traveling the region — from the Outer Banks to Williamsburg and many points in between — to share the unique experience of live symphonic music and hands-on music education with more than 150,000 people every year.

So here we are today. A proud organization with a rich history that finds itself at a crossroads, and also with a unique opportunity. Performing arts organizations everywhere are challenged by changing audience preferences, and the VSO is no different. We have recently made impressive strides toward fiscal stability and are finding creative new paths to engagement, but one goal remains - to grow our endowment and build capital to empower the Symphony to fulfill our important role across the region.

What follows is how we are capitalizing on this reality, honing our strengths and reinventing ourselves in ways that ensure that the Symphony remains a vibrant part of our community.

“We are so fortunate to have this world-class cultural asset in our community. The Symphony not only enhances the area’s cultural vibrancy but also allows many in our community, who may not otherwise have access, to experience firsthand the joys of live symphonic music.”

— Susan Goode, Secretary, Virginia Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors
We believe that with a vision comes victory. And the VSO has just that — a forward-looking plan as transformational as the music we perform. A major new initiative that will not only ensure our sustainability but also broaden our audience, expand our programs, and position this organization to be of even greater service and enrichment to our region for generations to come.

The instruments of change for the 21st century
Adaptation is the key to survival for all businesses today. That’s why the VSO is moving forward under an exciting and actionable vision based on a retooled business model worthy of a true 21st-century orchestra.

At the model’s core is increasing our engagement in the community by meeting people where they live and gather, simultaneously diversifying our audience as well as the very makeup of our organization. In addition, we plan to more aggressively deploy our greatest assets — our amazingly talented musicians and leaders — to generate new energy, new fans and new sources of revenue.

We will:
• Enhance programming to serve community educational, artistic and wellness needs
• Increase outreach, artist collaborations and community concerts by empowering our artists
• Foster lifelong learning from schoolchildren through the university level and beyond
• Increase non-traditional partnerships in areas including health care, higher education and social services, as well as with other arts organizations across the region
THE ECONOMICS OF SYMPHONICS

Not to be overlooked are the VSO’s significant contributions to the region’s economy. In 2018-19, our total economic impact in Hampton Roads was $16 million. The VSO also draws top-quality talent to live and work throughout our region. VSO musicians are an integral part of our community as teachers, mentors, and leaders. Symphony members perform regularly in local churches, and with the Virginia Opera, the Virginia Arts Festival, and our stage and ballet companies. And, quite simply, having a world-class symphony orchestra of VSO’s caliber makes this area more culturally attractive to corporate decision-makers and high-value job seekers.

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The reality for symphony orchestras across the country is this: a robust endowment, along with earned income from performances and annual contributed income, is necessary to ensure that a vibrant, professional company flourishes. Your generosity to our campaign will transform the VSO into an innovative, nimble community partner for the 21st century. Now is the time for this campaign, Vision Forward, and our goal of raising $16 million: $12 million to grow our endowment and provide working capital, plus $4 million in planned gifts to supplement the endowment over the longer term.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN, BEYOND THE STAGE

Exceptional musical performances will always be at the heart of the VSO’s activities; however, concerts are only one of the ways we uniquely participate in community life. Since the 1960s, the VSO has committed itself to education, as the benefits of exposure to music at an early age are well documented. Every year, our musicians engage with 35,000 young people in 13 school systems, bringing them music and culture they otherwise never experience.

Here’s how our students benefit:
- **Young People’s Concerts** provide music curriculum to students from 11 cities and become their first orchestra concert experience.
- **HeartStrings** brings string instrument instruction to students from four underserved elementary schools.
- **Master Classes** expose young musicians to the VSO’s internationally acclaimed guest soloists.
- **SOAR (School Orchestra Artist Residency)** matches VSO musicians with local school children at no cost for inspirational coaching and mentorship, increasing both their musical and academic engagement.

Our educational outreach also extends to partners such as Old Dominion University, where our added professional opportunities enhance the experience of current students and aid the faculty in the recruitment of prospective students.

“Having a symphony orchestra of the VSO’s caliber has a direct and dramatic impact on businesses in our region being able to recruit top candidates.”

— Howard Kern, President and CEO, Sentara Healthcare

VISION Forward

Every year, our musicians engage with 35,000 young people in 13 school systems, bringing them music and culture they might otherwise never experience.
BE A PATRON FOR PERMANENCE

With an eye to the future and a full appreciation for the past, we ask for your support. Support that we know is likely beyond your previous level of generosity.

With your help and our campaign’s success, you will become a true patron of permanence for the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. And you’ll ensure our continued positive momentum into the decades ahead. Future generations across the region will thank you.

WELCOME TO A NEW DAY FOR THE VSO!