



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11th, 2017
Contact: Igor Shakhman
Executive Director
orchestramgr@vancouversymphony.org
(360) 735-7278

VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AWARDED GRANT FROM FIRSTENBURG FOUNDATION

GRANT FOCUSES ON VSO'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE

(Vancouver, WA) The Firstenberg Foundation has authorized a grant for \$20,200 to The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra to further its Educational Program, announced VSO Executive Director Dr. Igor Shakhman. The grant is presented to help advance the VSO's Education Initiative, focusing specifically on working with children from low-income families and expanding its reach to disadvantaged communities.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the monumental effort to improve the quality of life in Clark County in this post-recession environment. As one of the area's main educational institutions, we see our role as one in which to inspire children to continue pursuing the path of knowledge and education. We are grateful to Firstenberg Foundation for their help in this endeavor." states VSO Board Chair Dr. David Smith.

The VSO is committed to the establishment and long-term success of music education programs in the community. The Firstenberg Foundation Grant will help support various educational initiatives including Maestro in the Schools, Student Vouchers and VSO Ensembles Performances in the Schools.

About Firstenberg Foundation

The Firstenberg Foundation invests in community nonprofits that make a measurable difference within Southwest Washington and the Portland Metropolitan Area, communities formerly served by First Independent Bank, which was founded by Edward W. Firstenberg. The Foundation supports the legacy of Edward W. and Mary Firstenberg, that of improving the economic conditions and quality of life within our community.

About The VSO

World-renowned Maestro Salvador Brotons is in his 26th season leading the professional orchestra of over 70 core members. For 38 seasons The VSO has been a cornerstone of Southwest Washington's arts community, providing world-renowned classical music, promoting young musicians, and opening doors to classical music for young audiences through events such as the annual In-School concerts, Young Artists Competition and various family-styled special events and performances. Many of our musicians are teachers in our school districts and beyond. The VSO provides our region with a multi-concert classical season every year and performs at Skyview Concert Hall, 1300 NW 139th Street, Vancouver. Season support for The VSO is provided by All Classical Portland and The Columbian. Additional support for the orchestra is provided by Oregon Public Broadcasting. Tickets for the VSO Chamber Series and all VSO symphony concerts are on sale now at (360) 735-7278 or www.vancouversymphony.org.

THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PO Box 525 Vancouver, WA 98666-0525 Phone (360) 735-7278
Fax: (360) 906-0355 www.vancouversymphony.org

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11th, 2017
Contact: Igor Shakhman
Executive Director
orchestramgr@vancouversymphony.org
(360) 735-7278

VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AWARDED GRANT FROM FIRSTENBURG FOUNDATION

GRANT FOCUSES ON VSO'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE

(Vancouver, WA) The Firstenberg Foundation has authorized a grant for \$20,200 to The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra to further its Educational Program, announced VSO Executive Director Dr. Igor Shakhman. The grant is presented to help advance the VSO's Education Initiative, focusing specifically on working with children from low-income families and expanding its reach to disadvantaged communities.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the monumental effort to improve the quality of life in Clark County in this post-recession environment. As one of the area's main educational institutions, we see our role as one in which to inspire children to continue pursuing the path of knowledge and education. We are grateful to Firstenberg Foundation for their help in this endeavor." states VSO Board Chair Dr. David Smith.

The VSO is committed to the establishment and long-term success of music education programs in the community. The Firstenberg Foundation Grant will help support various educational initiatives including Maestro in the Schools, Student Vouchers and VSO Ensembles Performances in the Schools.

About Firstenberg Foundation

The Firstenberg Foundation invests in community nonprofits that make a measurable difference within Southwest Washington and the Portland Metropolitan Area, communities formerly served by First Independent Bank, which was founded by Edward W. Firstenberg. The Foundation supports the legacy of Edward W. and Mary Firstenberg, that of improving the economic conditions and quality of life within our community.

About The VSO

World-renowned Maestro Salvador Brotons is in his 26th season leading the professional orchestra of over 70 core members. For 38 seasons The VSO has been a cornerstone of Southwest Washington's arts community, providing world-renowned classical music, promoting young musicians, and opening doors to classical music for young audiences through events such as the annual In-School concerts, Young Artists Competition and various family-styled special events and performances. Many of our musicians are teachers in our school districts and beyond. The VSO provides our region with a multi-concert classical season every year and performs at Skyview Concert Hall, 1300 NW 139th Street, Vancouver. Season support for The VSO is provided by All Classical Portland and The Columbian. Additional support for the orchestra is provided by Oregon Public Broadcasting. Tickets for the VSO Chamber Series and all VSO symphony concerts are on sale now at (360) 735-7278 or www.vancouversymphony.org.

THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PO Box 525 Vancouver, WA 98666-0525 Phone (360) 735-7278
Fax: (360) 906-0355 www.vancouversymphony.org

###

Empowering Through Music.



THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Music is universal. Listening to music is profoundly human, and connects us to other humans in amazing ways. Our symphony, our church choir, our local theater -- all those groups that enrich the cultural life of our community are the result of music programs. And these programs give back to communities forever.

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is committed to the establishment and long-term success of music education programs in our community. We are a non-profit organization with a two-fold mission: 1) To enhance the quality of life in Southwest Washington by presenting live symphonic music performances of the highest caliber, and 2) To support and empower others in our community through music education that facilitates meaningful learning experiences.

The benefits of music education and its impact on early development are undoubtedly proven, thoroughly researched, and well documented. We know that students who are introduced to music and begin music lessons in grades 8-12 see math, reading, history, geography and social skills soar by 40 percent compared to non music students. Consequently, they have higher career goals, are more civically engaged, and possess the skills needed to actively participate in a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement.* Furthermore, in listeners of ANY age, music has been shown to reverse the body's response to stress at the DNA-level -- music benefits us all.

With your help, we are committed to ensuring that everyone in our community is touched through music education. The VSO is not simply the largest performing arts organization in SW Washington, but also a citizen of Clark County, and as such, our work is a collective effort with other citizens. Our programs, projects, and initiatives are only made possible through the generosity of incredible supporters, whose service and financial gifts help drive our efforts to facilitate change and implement long-term strategies. Together, we can inspire and empower those around us.

*(quote, p4)

“Music has a great power for bringing people together. With so many forces in this world acting to drive wedges between people, it’s important to preserve those things that help us experience our common humanity.”

Ted Turner, Turner Broadcasting System



STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

WHAT IS A STUDENT AMBASSADOR?

Student Ambassadors are a select group of high school and college music students who are excited about sharing their love of classical music and getting their campus connected to the VSO. The Student Ambassador Program provides a leadership opportunity for them through service and representation of the VSO to their peers.

Student Ambassadors will play a major role in supporting our outreach programs on campus. They will be responsible for helping the VSO spread the word about upcoming performances, our educational programs and the benefits the VSO has for students, such as discount tickets. In exchange, the ambassadors receive exclusive access behind the scenes of the VSO at rehearsals, receptions, and throughout the year as an active volunteer and peer mentor in the educational programs. They will have an opportunity to provide critical input for the VSO's social media platforms and other outreach methods geared toward their generation.

WHY HAVE STUDENT AMBASSADORS?

Students tend to have a more natural connection with their classmates than a teacher, as they communicate with them in a way that is relevant, on a level that their generation will understand, and by using appropriate language and actions.

More importantly, we offer the Student Ambassador an excellent opportunity to gain valuable work experience - developing and improving communication and interpersonal skills, team work, public speaking, presentation and networking. Our Ambassadors become confident, dynamic and strong communicators.

“Music is about communication, creativity, and cooperation, and, by studying music in school, students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives, and experience the world from a new perspective.”

Bill Clinton, former President, United States of America



ADULT EDUCATION/SPECIAL PROJECTS

SENIOR CONCERTS

VSO musicians offer live, intimate performances at senior independent and assisted living centers throughout Clark County during the year. We understand the transforming power of music, particularly with the elderly; it allows individuals to reminisce and relate to emotions and experiences in a unique way. In fact, music has the ability to unlock a world of memories for those struggling with dementia. Studies show that, in seniors with dementia, music re-awakens many and brings out raw emotions, expressions and memories. Music may also increase cognitive function and balance, reducing the risk for falls.

PRE-CONCERT TALKS

Prior to every symphonic concert, the VSO offers a 30 minute educational pre-concert talk, where Maestro Brotons and other expert musicologists discuss the music that will be performed, demonstrate recordings of musical excerpts, and answer questions from the audience. These informative talks are very popular and well-attended.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The VSO also provides other special educational events, such as the live taping of Philosophy Talk. This popular public radio program was presented in collaboration with OPB, All Classical Portland Radio and Internationally renowned soloist, violinist Anne Akiko Meyers.

Our vision for the role we play in Clark County would not have become reality without the huge commitments and active contributions from our sponsors and partners. To publicly thank them and to introduce our education programs to others in the community, the VSO announces its 1st Annual Jazz Concert in April. Headliner Ken Poplowski, considered arguably the best jazz clarinetist in the world, takes the stage at the Heathman Lodge, which is transformed into a quintessential jazz club for the evening. This is the first of many special events devoted to the VSO's partners and the projects they support.

"Music making makes the elderly healthier... There were significant decreases in anxiety, depression, and loneliness --. These are factors that are critical in coping with stress, stimulating the immune system, and in improved health.

Dr. Frederick Tims, reported in AMC Music News, June 2, 1999



GIFTED CHILDREN/YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra has one of the best music programs in the area for advanced students. Because of the high caliber of concert performances, outstanding music direction by internationally renowned Maestro Salvador Brotons, and collaborations with the world's top guest artists, the VSO has become an inspiration for talented young musicians throughout the region.

Every year, the VSO presents a one of a kind opportunity for top music students to compete for generous scholarships and the honor of performing with the orchestra under the baton of the Maestro in two sold out performances in April. The VSO's Young Artist Competition is generally considered one of the most prestigious contests on the West Coast. The annual competition is highly anticipated by applicants, their parents, music teachers and the media. According to letters and Young Artists interviews, this event has been a life changing and career defining experience for many of the contestants. Many Young Artist Competition winners have gone on to become professional musicians and winners of numerous international competitions.

Initially, over 60 applicants ages 18 and under submit their recordings to judges in three categories; piano, strings and winds/brass instruments. Following a rigorous selection process, the three top candidates in each category (9 total) are chosen by judges (the most respected authorities in each category). These 9 finalists then compete in front of a sold-out crowd. 3 gold medalists will win the right to perform with the orchestra. The other finalists receive generous scholarships and diplomas.

VSO MASTERCLASSES

The VSO will present a series of Masterclasses with visiting international guest artists and distinguished judges. Local music teachers, band directors and orchestra conductors will be notified of this opportunity and encouraged to select a qualified student to participate in the masterclass, which will be open to the general public. This is an incredible opportunity to learn directly from leading world class musicians in an intimate setting right here in Vancouver.

PRE-CONCERT PERFORMANCES

Selected advanced groups will have an opportunity to present a 30 minute performance prior to the full symphony concerts in the lobby of Skyview Concert Hall. These performances provide the groups with the necessary experience and exposure for their own performances in the future.

"Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement. The future of our nation depends on providing our children with a complete education that includes music."
Gerald Ford, former President, United States of America



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

When music is incorporated into a child's life, it increases language development, IQ, brain activity, and spatial-temporal skills. But beyond that....music exposes children to the incomparable.

IN-SCHOOL CONCERTS:

The VSO presents two full orchestra educational performances conducted by Maestro Brotons annually. Average attendance ranges from 1500 to 1800 students, primarily from elementary schools. The concerts are popular among children, music teachers and principals. Each concert concludes with a Q & A session.

INSTRUMENT PETTING ZOO:

In partnership with Beacock Music, we present our popular instrument "petting zoo" during our Outdoor Summer Concert in Esther Short Park. During this event, music educators offer young children the chance to try making sounds on instruments of their choosing. This is often the first exposure a child has to music and musical instruments, and may spark the child's interest in pursuing musical studies.

FAMILY CONCERT:

The Historic Kiggins Theater is host to the VSO's annual family concert, part of our Chamber Series. Performed by the Chamber Ensemble, it has included classics such as Prokofiev's "Peter & the Wolf" and "Pan Piper".

LOW INCOME/UNDERSERVED STUDENTS

OUTREACH CONCERTS:

The VSO presents several outreach concerts annually in low income and underserved schools. We work closely with Clark County school districts to identify specific schools that would benefit most from this program. These small-venue performances provide the opportunity for lively interaction between students and musicians, and conclude with an extended Q & A session. Each concert serves between 500 and 700 students.

STUDENT VOUCHER PROGRAM:

Each year, the VSO distributes complimentary concert admission vouchers for low income school children and the adults who accompany them. These are typically distributed by Music Teachers, Band Directors and Orchestra Conductors to their own students.

MAESTRO IN THE SCHOOLS:

Internationally renowned and critically acclaimed VSO Music Director & Conductor Salvador Brotons works with local music groups, including bands and school orchestras throughout the year. It is a once in a lifetime experience for young students. The VSO receives numerous requests from local band and orchestra teachers for Maestro Brotons' appearances.

"Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence, traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. -- Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification while giving pleasure to others."

Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Leading Heart Surgeon, Baylor College of Music