



EUGENE SYMPHONY

March 12, 2013

Public Comments in support, SB 319

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
Senator Bruce Starr, Vice-Chair
Senator Chris Edwards
Senator Fred Girod
Senator Rod Monroe
Senator Chuck Thomsen

Dear Senator Beyer and members of the Senate Business and Transportation Committee,

Greetings! I'm writing today as a representative of the Eugene Symphony and all Oregonians who are passionate about arts and culture to ask for your support on SB319, legislation to renew the Oregon Cultural Tax Credit. Like my fellow Oregonians who contribute both to nonprofits and to the Cultural Trust, I believe the arts enrich the lives of all Oregonians. The Oregon Cultural Trust supports activities I'm passionate about, in particular, music education for young people and adults.

I'd like to share a little bit about the work of the Eugene Symphony in the southern Willamette Valley. Over the last two years, the Symphony has launched an unprecedented expansion of our education programs – reaching children and adults throughout our region with music-education and engagement activities. Every time I attend one of these activities, I'm impressed by the immediate benefit music education has on children. Seeing a child move from disengaged and uninterested to actively participating in creating rhythms and being absorbed by the performances by professional musicians in their classrooms is evidence that music has immeasurable benefit.

We are extremely proud of our in-school music programs, *Symphonic Adventures* and *Link Up*, which reached nearly 1,400 students with high-quality music instruction. Both programs concluded with a Eugene Symphony youth concert, and some of the lucky students even had the opportunity to perform with the Symphony at our fall concert.

Symphonic Adventures

Our *Symphonic Adventures* in-school music program reached 23 schools (1,200 students) in the Eugene-4J, Springfield and Creswell school districts. This program was launched as a collaboration between Eugene Symphony and the Eugene 4J, Springfield, Bethel, and Creswell school districts, and uses a curriculum developed by local elementary music teachers under the guidance of the Symphony's Education Director and Education Committee. The curriculum comprises four lesson plans on the key musical concepts of rhythm, harmony, melody, and timbre. The four-month program includes:

- Four classroom sessions with lesson plans led by school music specialists (where available) or trained Eugene Symphony volunteers—the majority of whom are musicians, former music teachers, and/or former professional educators
- Four in-school performances by Eugene Symphony musicians, designed to demonstrate and support key concepts from the lesson plans. Performances are held at third-grade assemblies in participating schools and include interactive activities for students

- Follow-up lesson plans for classroom teachers that apply these musical concepts to support state learning standards in the basic academic curriculum (e.g. rhythm and mathematics)
- A culminating trip for students and teachers to a Eugene Symphony Youth Concert

Link Up

Link-up is a Carnegie Hall-designed afterschool music education program targeting low income and at-risk third – fifth graders through music classes led by professional teaching artists. Using the Link Up curriculum, students in Eugene and Springfield explored melody through work with soprano recorder and voice, critical listening, and improvisation and composition. The sessions culminated with students performing as part of the Eugene Symphony's November Youth Concerts.

These two programs were designed to culminate with our fall and spring Youth Concerts, interactive performances that introduce students to musical concepts and a live, professional orchestra performance. This year, our youth concerts attracted more than 8,000 elementary, middle and high school students from throughout the southern Willamette Valley, including students from Harrisburg Elementary, Central Linn Junior High School, Cottage Grove High School, Creswell Middle School, Siuslaw Middle School and Clear Lake Elementary.

As passionate as we are about youth education, so too do we feel strongly about educating and engaging music lovers of all ages. The Symphony was fortunate to receive a \$20,000 grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust to fund our 2012 Counterpoint Initiative – a month-long series of concerts, film screenings, public readings and lectures and community discussions about the universal themes of war and peace. The centerpiece of this initiative, a concert with Tom Brokaw, attracted more than 500 new patrons, or 26% of our audience. The initiative reached 8,000 community members and featured more than 20 activities hosted by the Eugene Symphony and our 12 community partners. We plan to continue to program initiatives like Counterpoint in the future because, like our youth-education programs, this type of programming supports community engagement and enriches the lives of the people who participate.

Supporting the Oregon Cultural Tax credit is a good business and community decision. Your support of the Oregon Cultural tax credit will enable organizations like the Eugene Symphony to:

- Use the Trust to help leverage additional support from donors to further the work of nonprofit arts organizations;
- Help fill the educational void for schools who do not have music teachers or who have reduced music education for our young people;
- Provide employment and significant revenues to state and local governments. (In the City of Eugene alone, a 2012 study by Americans for the Arts shows that nonprofit arts and culture are a \$45.6 million industry supporting more than 1,700 full-time equivalent jobs and generating \$2.4 million in local and state government revenue.)

Thank you for your hard work, and for supporting the Oregon Cultural Tax Credit.

Sincerely,



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