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JACKSON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA UNVEILS PLANS FOR NEW CENTER AND ENDOWMENT!

“SOUND VISION” CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED!

OVER \$2 MILLION OF \$4.5 MILLION GOAL PLEDGED TO DATE!

Jackson, MI – February 8, 2008 – The Jackson Symphony Orchestra announced plans today to establish an Education and Performing Arts Center in downtown Jackson as well as a permanent endowment for program enhancement and expansion.

“I am excited to announce that the Jackson Symphony Orchestra will open a new Education and Performing Arts Center,” stated Phil Willis, Chairman of the Orchestra’s Board of Directors. “We also plan to double our current endowment to support artistic excellence and program diversity and expansion.”

The Jackson Symphony Orchestra Education and Performing Arts Center will be located at 215 W. Michigan Avenue in downtown Jackson. The Orchestra has been leasing the first floor, mezzanine, and lower level in what had been the Comerica building for the past 14 years.

Last July, Comerica Bank generously donated the building, valued at approximately \$1 million, to the Orchestra.

“The magnificent gift of this building by Comerica Bank provided the impetus to plan a bold new vision of service,” explained Willis. “After careful study, we authorized a \$4.5 million campaign to make our **“Sound Vision”** plans a reality.”

Willis pointed out that \$2.5 million will be spent on capital projects including \$1.2 million to create the Education and Performing Arts Center. The center will include new programming spaces, upgraded existing areas, and increased visibility and accessibility through building improvements and the acquisition of additional parking.

One of the principal features of the new Education & Performing Arts Center will be the transformation of the Peter A. Weatherwax Rehearsal Hall into a state-of-the-art, 150-seat performance/rehearsal and multiuse area.

The second floor of the Center will become an office complex where performing arts and cultural organizations can have the same benefits of operation as the JSO received from Comerica Bank over the past 14 years. The third floor will house the “Hands-On, Minds-On” Music Education Gallery, the JSO Music Composition and Learning Lab, and serve as a space for special music education activities.

In addition to the creation of the Education & Performing Arts Center, a \$1 million board-restricted Capital Facilities & Equipment Fund will be established. This fund, which is not an endowment fund, will provide for building and equipment upgrades and maintenance as well as for repairs beyond those normally budgeted.

“The Jackson Symphony Orchestra has been serving our city, county, and region since 1950 with more than just outstanding musical performances,” stated JSO Musical Director and Maestro, Stephen Osmond. “We have been providing innovative and diverse educational and outreach programs in our schools and communities.”

Among these programs are the “JSO Goes to School” which is an umbrella program that provides in-school music activities and performances. The innovative Community Music School created in 1991 has given over 150,000 music lessons to 5,000 students. JSO programs are designed to reach all children including those categorized as “at risk.”

“The proposed \$2 million in endowment funds from the campaign will help enhance and expand these and other community outreach programs,” explained Mary Spring, JSO Director of Development. “In addition, these permanent funds will secure our legacy of strong artistic excellence; enrichment of performances and concerts; and, increased community outreach, recording, and publications initiatives.”

Endowment contributions will be held in perpetuity with a percentage of earnings and/or growth used to expand and enhance programs and operations. The successful completion of this campaign will increase the JSO permanent endowment from \$1.1 million to more than \$3 million.

Board Chair Willis emphasized that the JSO Endowment will not replace ongoing annual fund activities. “The endowment will supplement and enhance our ongoing programs and operations.”

Willis also introduced Rick Davies, President of the Jackson Region, Comerica Bank, who is one of the Co-Chairs for the “Sound Vision” Campaign. Joining Rick as leaders of the campaign are his wife Debby, Tom and Nancy Evanson, and Phil and Pat Willis. In addition, Larry and Val Bullen and Bob and Laurie LaZebnik are the Honorary Co-Chairs of the campaign.

“I am excited to report that over \$2 million has been raised to date in the campaign,” announced Davies. “This initial support has come from numerous local foundations, lead gifts from a number of individuals, and 100% of our Board of Directors and Campaign leadership. The response from early donors has been exceptional and underscores the vital role the arts and especially the Jackson Symphony Orchestra plays in our community.”

The campaign will continue through this summer. Businesses, corporations, foundations, organizations, professionals, and individuals are being asked to make gifts and multi-year pledges. Gifts and payments on pledges are tax deductible.

“Thus far we have assembled an outstanding team of community leaders to help make the “Sound Vision” campaign a success,” stated Davies. “I hope everyone recognizes from their involvement the importance of this project to our city and region.”

He went on to stress, “If you are asked to be a volunteer in the campaign, please say yes! You can play an important role in helping not just raise the capital and endowment funds for our Symphony Orchestra, but also acting as an ambassador for this community resource.”

Davies emphasized that every gift – large or small – is important to reach the \$4.5 million goal. “The Jackson Symphony Orchestra is one of our community’s shining lights, and deserves our support. And that is not just me saying that, but the *Detroit News* which hailed the JSO as an orchestra of which ‘*Jackson has every right to be proud.*’”

Last season, more than 7,000 people attended the JSO Classical Concerts; 2,500 attended Special Concerts and the Chamber Series; and, over 7,000 participated in JSO educational programs. During the 2007-2008 season, 350 musicians were involved with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra. The Orchestra’s 2007-2008 budget is \$580,000. The Musical Director and Maestro, Stephen Osmond, is celebrating his 30th anniversary as the conductor of the JSO during the 2007-2008 season.