



Wichita Symphony Orchestra

2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT

thank you for 80 years of musical joy!



To My Friends and Fellow Supporters of the Wichita Symphony,

It is a true honor to write to you as I begin my service as Chair of the Wichita Symphony Board of Directors. My connection to the Symphony runs deep—first sparked when my grandmother introduced me to it as a young aspiring musician. Like many of you, I have experienced firsthand how this remarkable organization enriches lives, strengthens our community, and inspires generations through the power of music.

This past season was especially meaningful. Early in 2024, our Board of Directors embarked on an extensive national search for the Symphony's next leader. After months of thoughtful collaboration and listening, that process brought us Dr. Tim Storhoff, who has already made a tremendous impact in his first year as Executive Director. Tim's passion for music, strategic vision, and commitment to Wichita have energized our team and positioned us for a dynamic future.

We also celebrated the Symphony's 80th Anniversary season in 2024-2025—a milestone that honored the visionaries who built this institution and highlighted the profound role the Symphony continues to play in our city. Each concert, education program, and community event showcased the artistry of our musicians and the vitality of our mission. The meaningful moments you will read about in this report were made possible by you—our community of supporters—whose generosity empowers us to innovate, to lead, and to share Kansas's voice with the world.

As I step into the role of Board Chair, I'm not just looking back with gratitude—I'm also looking forward with excitement. We are embarking on a new round of strategic planning to shape the Symphony's next chapter. While our core mission remains steadfast, the post-pandemic landscape calls for fresh approaches in program development and community engagement. We view strategic planning not as a document to place on a shelf, but as a living, joyful composition—one that reflects the needs of our city, the significance of our art form, and the evolving ways we share it. This process will include listening to voices from across Wichita, because **this orchestra belongs to all of us**. Your ideas, energy, and support will be vital as we expand access, deepen connections, and ensure that the Symphony remains a vibrant cultural cornerstone for generations to come.

I am thrilled for what lies ahead of us. Together—with the leadership of Dr. Storhoff and Maestro Hege, the artistry of our musicians, and the enduring generosity of our community—we will write the next movement of the Wichita Symphony's story. Thank you for being part of this family—we truly couldn't do it without you.

With joy and gratitude,

Jamil Malone
Chair of the Board of Directors
Wichita Symphony Society



Left: WSO Board Chair Jamil Malone enjoys welcoming patrons at Symphony in the Gardens, May 2025

Above: Dr. Tim Storhoff introduces himself at our 80th season opening concert, *She's Got Soul*, Sept 2024

A Year of Musical Joy

"Six years ago I took my daughter Annabelle to see the WSO perform Beethoven's 9th Symphony for her 16th birthday before I joined the WSO Chorus. **I joined the Chorus in 2021** because she encouraged me to get back into singing. This year, **we sang Beethoven's 9th with the WSO together to a sold-out house** before she graduates college and moves on to her next adventure!" - Andy Adams, *Board & Chorus member*

All the way from Germany, **master cellist Alban Gerhardt** visited Wichita State University to teach a cello masterclass while in Kansas for his concert with the WSO. **Students from WSU and our own Youth Orchestras** musicians treasured the opportunity to learn from such an accomplished artist.

Supporters Jim & Lisa Vayda enjoyed the opportunity to watch guest artists **Time for Three** rehearse with our orchestra ahead of the January concert that they sponsored. Lisa even wore the trio's t-shirt from their impactful Anti-Bullying campaign in 2015 when they also came to Wichita. WSO is **proud to connect our patrons with world-class musicians**, both from Wichita and far beyond our corner of Kansas.

In February 2025, we premiered *Dust and Ions*, a new orchestral suite by **Wichita-born composer Alex Wakim**, whose music reflects his Lebanese heritage and his Kansas upbringing. We engaged Alex widely through local media appearances and an intimate, insightful Artist Salon fundraiser, as well as visits with our Youth Orchestras and our volunteer Ambassadors—all to highlight the **unique privilege Wichita has to work with a living, accessible composer** whose voice resonates deeply with our audiences and brings the creative process to life in a personal and visible way.

In March, patrons joined **Concertmaster Holly Mulcahy** for an enriching visit to Great Plains Nature Center to explore birdsong, its connections to music, and the beautiful bird species that Kansas enjoys each spring. **Bird-lovers: stay tuned for more events like this ahead of *The Firebird* in March 2026!**



Symphonic Celebration Resonates Near and Far

30,283

Total Reached in 2024-2025

16,428

Total Concert
Attendance



1,080

Subscribers

3,100

First-Time Concert Goers

★ 434 ★

"Superfans"

(Super Pass season-ticket holders)



1,533

Student Tickets Sold

WSO proudly offers student tickets ranging from \$10-20 for anyone in kindergarten through college.

67212
67226

Top Wichita Zip Codes

35

States Across America

151

Kansas Cities and Towns,
from Abilene to Yates Center

50

Kansas Counties

No one traveled further to see the WSO than our esteemed visitors from Wichita's sister city, Orléans, France, who observed dress rehearsal for *Beethoven 9* as the finale to their busy week of enjoying all the beauty, kindness, and joy that Wichita has to offer.



War Horse in Concert | Oct 27, 2024

Partners: Wichita Repertory Theater, Butler Community College Concert Choir

"Lots of different kinds of art kept me mesmerized: actors, musicians, chorus, drawings, red poppies, use of the entire stage. And, of course, the love that was so present in this story." - Audience Member

"I am so glad I had the opportunity to enjoy this artistic experience – thank you for bringing this to Wichita! I am a retired musician and feeling so joyful from this performance." - Audience Member



Spirit of the Season | Dec 10, 2024

Partners: Spirit AeroSystems, Inc., Butler Community College Concert Choir, our Youth Orchestras students

2,977 patrons joined us for our beloved free holiday concert and **donated an incredible 3,329 pounds of food to the Kansas Food Bank**, setting a new Wichita Symphony record that we hope to break in 2025.



Symphony in the Gardens: Timeless Romance | May 15, 2025

Partner: Botanica, the Wichita Gardens

"The music and gardens combine for a lovely experience! Each year something is slightly different, which tells me the coordinators at WSO and Botanica are always listening to feedback and trying to improve. My sister and I go together every year!" - Audience Member

"This is my favorite spring event—beautiful place, good food, magical connections with musicians, and the glory of the symphony to cap it all off." - Audience Member



Playing Across the Parks | May 3, 2025

Partner: Wichita Park & Recreation

This year, over **280 people joined us for a mini-tour of free concerts across Wichita**: a string quartet and a brass quintet, all WSO musicians, traveled to Chisholm Creek, Schweiter, Cessna, Buffalo, Douglas, and Woodland Parks to let the joy of classical music resonate city-wide.

The sound of wichita's future

Young People's Concerts

Across 8 performances in November 2024 and January 2025, **11,554 elementary and middle school students** experienced the magic of live symphonic music at our Young People's Concerts (YPCs), field trips designed to inspire and educate the next generation. **942 of those students attended for free** last season—your generosity ensures that cost is never a barrier to this incredible experience.

Perhaps no one knows the excitement of YPCs better than our **Wichita Symphony Ambassadors**: this season, **over 50 volunteers** helped thousands of schoolchildren move safely from their bus to their concert hall seat and back—and they provide excellent snacks for our musicians to enjoy during back-to-back concerts!

Symphony Storytime

584 attendees joined us for **Symphony Storytime in summer 2024**—our newest, free program for our youngest audiences—hosted at local libraries in Wichita.

In summer 2025, the program put on 20 performances, giving valuable work to our musicians during the Symphony's "off-season." We performed across the region at community hubs like **Hilltop Aspires** and **Heartspring**, and at **libraries across Wichita and beyond** – from **El Dorado** to **McConnell Air Force Base**.

We nearly **tripled our attendance from 2024 to 2025**: **1,614 attendees** enjoyed the chance to hear a children's story, listen to our musicians play young-fan-favorites like "Baby Shark," and chat with our musicians after the performance.

Every family brought home "**Coloring the Wichita Symphony**," a coloring book illustrated by local artist Lindsey Kernodle featuring the Century II Concert Hall and actual WSO musicians.

In response to audience feedback, we added **bilingual Spanish and sensory-friendly performances**, which helps us reach more young people who may not have experienced live classical music before.



The Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras

Your support empowers our **deepest educational investment, the Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras (WSYO)**, which nurture our next generation of musicians. Under the guidance of professional conductors and educators, students receive exceptional instruction, mentorship, and opportunities that sharpen their musical skills, build confidence, form lifelong friendships, and shape their futures. WSYO alumni carry these lessons into careers in music and beyond.

311
Students

6 Ensembles

Youth Symphony, Repertory Orchestra, Youth Wind Ensemble, Youth Chamber Players, Youth Concert Band, Introductory String Orchestra

50 Students
volunteered to usher at WSO
concerts throughout the season.

\$59,507
Donated to WSYO

Conductor Spotlight: Dr. Tim Shade

After a collaborative search for a new Youth Symphony conductor, WSO leadership proudly welcomed Dr. Timothy Shade, Director of Wichita State University's School of Music, to the helm in January 2025.

Dr. Shade reflects on his first semester at the Youth Symphony podium:

"I am honored to work with the dedicated team of administrators, conductors, and coaches to create inspiring moments that our young musicians will carry with them for years to come. Our first semester of music-making was fantastic. I was struck by how quickly the students embraced both my antics and the emotional demands of the repertoire. The artistry and collaboration we worked toward truly came alive in the spring concert, and I am thrilled to carry that momentum forward this fall. The Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras are a place where young musicians learn to perform, but they also learn to listen deeply, connect artistically, and find joy in music-making together. I am excited to help nurture this important tradition for future generations."



Investment in Music —→ Investment in Kansas

Powering Jobs, Passion, and Purpose

Your generosity sustains the artistic excellence of the Wichita Symphony, but more importantly, it strengthens our community by helping us attract and retain the most gifted musicians in our region. Each musician has their own story and brings their unique talents and perspectives to the orchestra. Together, their dedication and passion are the driving forces behind every note and every performance, creating unforgettable experiences for everyone in our community. Wichita Symphony musicians are embedded in this town: **our musicians provide the soundtrack for weddings, church services, corporate events, bar mitzvahs, and more. You hear them in the pit for opera and musical theatre performances. They teach in our schools and universities.**

THE WICHITA SYMPHONY IS WHERE THEY COME TOGETHER.

Your support helped WSO employ over 200 professional artists in 2024-2025:

- 80 full-time orchestra musicians
- 39 substitute orchestra musicians
- 32 guest artists
- 11 conductors
- 21 Youth Orchestra coaches
- 11 living composers
- 6 paid Chorus musicians
- 3 visual artists
- Countless stagehands, photographers, audio technicians, lighting designers, and conductors' assistants.

Plus, we engaged over 120 volunteer musicians in the Wichita Symphony Chorus and 300 student musicians in our Youth Orchestras!



25%

of WSO musicians are alumni of our Youth Orchestras program

50%

have held their WSO position for over a decade – 2 string players have been WSO musicians for over 50 years!

77%

of our full-time orchestra musicians are educators

Administrative Staff

Wichita Symphony employs 10 full-time and 4 part-time staff, plus seasonal employees like Usher Directors, Concert Security, and Box Office Associates.

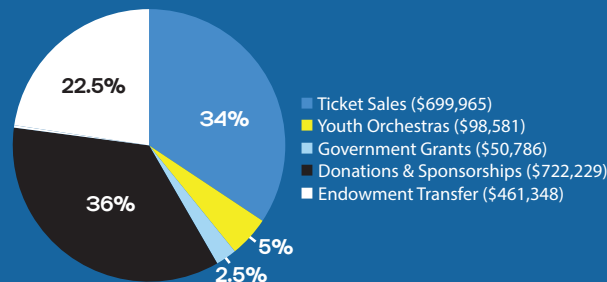


WSO staff joined other local arts leaders at the Kansas State Capitol for "Arts Day" (the first in over a decade) to advocate for vital funding in January 2025. Left to right: Lindsay Benacka (Director of Arts & Cultural Services, City of Wichita), Dr. Nathanael May (Chair of Fine Arts, Friends University), Micaela Heinrich-Arndt (Director of Development, Wichita Symphony), Angela Cassette (Managing Director, Music Theatre Wichita), Dr. Tim Storhoff (Executive Director, Wichita Symphony)

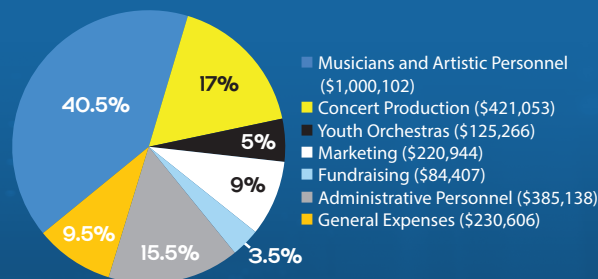
Notes & Numbers

The Wichita Symphony's finances are overseen by our 26-member Board of Directors. These individuals volunteer their time and talent to enhance the artistic excellence and community outreach endeavors of the Wichita Symphony. Their guidance and support are an integral part of the beauty we perform.

REVENUES*



EXPENSES*



* unaudited numbers

759

Total Donor Households

306

New Donor Households

\$9.68M

Endowment Market Value
(as of August 31, 2025)

7

New Bequest Pledges

Do you have a planned gift to the
Wichita Symphony in your will?
Contact our office to let us know!



Our work is graciously supported by two government entities: the City of Wichita through the Division of Arts & Culture and the State of Kansas through the Kansas Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The mission of the Wichita Symphony is to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences of all ages in our region through performances of orchestral music, thereby enhancing the vibrancy and vitality of Wichita.

Thank You to Our 2024-2025 Donors!

Gifts received July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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