

**State of the Symphony Annual Report
Santa Rosa Symphony 2019-2020
Submitted to the SRS Board of Directors
by President & CEO Alan Silow
June 26, 2020**

Executive Summary: “It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times”



First “full” season for Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting, impacted by COVID-19 pandemic

This has been a fiscal year like no other in our 92 year history. The light of a brilliant season with so many superlatives was suddenly dimmed with the mid-March onset impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

It has tested and will continue to test our ingenuity and commitment to artistic and educational vibrancy, diversity and relevancy within a fiscally sound environment.

Top Ten Organizational Highlights this year included:

- First full season conducting and programming of music director Francesco Lecce-Chong met with great acclaim
- Most successful gala fundraiser in our 17 year history honoring Gaye LeBaron
- Negotiated new five year contracts with Musicians and Stagehands Unions
- Overall enrollment in youth orchestras exceeds budgeted goal
- Ticket sales for Classical Series and Family Series were on record pace
- Dynamic, creative and effective community engagement while sheltered-in-place
- Virtual SRS Youth Orchestra concert online a technical and artistic first for SRS
- Donations buoyed by high levels of individual donations, board giving, government grants and League support
- Secured PPP loan of \$480,167 to cover musician and staff payroll costs
- Despite an end of fiscal year of unanticipated financial turmoil, this will be the seventeenth consecutive year ending the fiscal year in the black

Traumatic Times Call for Inspirational Responses

9/11. The Great Recession. The Tubbs and Kincadee wildfires. Drought-forced power outages.

The traumatic events of this new century have all had one key characteristic – we knew when they ended – and recovery could then commence. And as part of that recovery, the Santa Rosa Symphony provided our community with the healing collective experience of our inspired music.

Now with the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic upon us, it's fundamentally different. The future is absolutely uncertain and so there is no knowing when large public gatherings will be approved, let alone when patrons will be comfortable to return.

The pandemic's immediate impact has been overwhelmingly painful, if not deadly, for this planet, for our country and for so many of our businesses and citizenry. By mid-May, I heard this truthful refrain "this has been the longest year of my life, and it's only May."

It led us to not only cancel the last 8 weeks of the season's performances and GMC summer season but also required administrative staff to immediately move to working remotely, sheltered in place, where we remain to this day. Though definitely not seamless, the staff have embraced a new, digital world filled with new terminology, such as VPN, Slack and Zoom, and despite long work hours, operated with creativity and effectiveness.

- PPP loan of nearly \$500,000 was secured to cover payroll costs of staff and musicians for 8 week period April-June 2020 with likelihood of it being forgiven in 20-21 season
- All 8 concerts have been rescheduled into the last half of 20-21 season
- SRSYO tour to Spain, second premiere of the First Symphony project and the new Opera in Concert of The Magic Flute have been moved from FY21 to FY22 season
- While sheltered in place, numerous online musical presentations and community engagement activities launched, including music director creative 'watch parties' via his website, virtual SRSYO concert, online videos/classes for youth ensembles and Simply Strings, KRCB radio broadcasts of past SRS performances, posting individual SRS musician videos, zoom 'conversations' with donors and music director and more
- New re-programming and new presentation format created for 20-21 season in face of health and safety health protocols and social distancing parameters to allow for Fall opening
- Videotaped performances obtained from GMC of SRS hall opening concert in September 2012 and last free community concert of July 2019 featuring Francesco and Four Seasons of Sonoma County for streaming this summer/fall.
- Successfully put substantial health mitigation procedures in place that will allow for in-person opening of Summer Music Academy in July.

Memorable Artistic FY19-20 Accomplishments

For the Santa Rosa Symphony Association's immensely challenged 92nd season, and Francesco Lecce-Chong's first full season as Music Director, as well as its eighth season as the Resident Orchestra of the Green Music Center, the Santa Rosa Symphony presented five Classical Series sets and two Family Concert Series sets in the GMC's Weill Hall, and three Symphony Pops Series sets at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts.

The SRS was again engaged by Sonoma State University to perform for a Fourth of July concert, and the SRS and SSU co-presented the sixth annual free Community Concert, *The Four Seasons of Sonoma County*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* In Concert with the film projected at the GMC's Weill Hall + Lawn.

The 2019-20 season was Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong's second season as Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony, conducting the Free Community Concert – *The Four Seasons of Sonoma County*, and *Raider of the Lost Ark* In Concert, the first Family Series concert and Free Concerts for Youth, and the first five concert sets of the Classical Series for which Maestro Lecce-Chong's programming and introductions of new works by contemporary composers was enthusiastically performed and received, enhanced with the classical repertoire by revered composers.

During Maestro Lecce-Chong's second season as Music Director, his leadership has brought a new dimension to the Orchestra's professionalism and commitment towards their attitude and musicianship, and the Symphony's reputation shall undoubtedly continue to grow as the musicians demonstrate their passion and skill, along with the imaginative, diverse and relevant programming by the Music Director.

Classical Set 1 (*Unmasking the Stars*) featured Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting Anna Clyne's *Masquerade* for Orchestra and Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with renowned piano soloist Garrick Ohlsson. Opening the second half of the program was *How the Solar System Was Won* for Orchestra by the first *First Symphony Project* composer Matthew Browne, as a prelude to his world-premiere commission programmed for Classical Set 5. The program concluded with Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

Classical Set 2 (*Master of the Modern Banjo*) featured Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting *America the Beautiful* by Samuel Ward, Aaron Copland's Hoe-Down from the Four Dance Episodes from *Rodeo*, Béla Fleck's *Juno Concerto* for Banjo and Orchestra with banjo soloist Béla Fleck, concluding with Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The Classical Set 2 production was compromised by the Kincaid Fire in Sonoma County, resulting in the closure of Sonoma State University, including the Weill Hall of the Green Music Center. As each day went by, the Tuesday and Wednesday rehearsals were cancelled, and unless rehearsals could occur on Thursday with the orchestra musicians, Maestro Lecce-Chong and Béla Fleck, the three weekend performances were in jeopardy of being cancelled. Fortunately, the SRS was able to access to GMC to obtain stage equipment and percussion instruments, and two rehearsals were scheduled on Thursday at the Graton Resort and Casino Ballroom. By Saturday, the Green Music Center became available, and the dress rehearsal and performances were successfully presented. Due to the reduced rehearsal schedule, Maestro Lecce-Chong revised the program, deleting three of the movements from Copland's *Rodeo*, but adding Ward's *America the Beautiful*, which was poignant and meaningful for the patrons.

Classical Set 3 (*Mozart's Swan Song*) featured Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 39 from the forte-piano, Jessie Montgomery's *Records from a Vanishing City* and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Requiem in D minor featuring solo vocalists Shawnette Sulker, Laura Krumm, Benjamin Brecher and Philip Skinner with the SSU Symphonic Chorus directed by Jenny Bent.

Classical Set 4 (*Shadows and Sunshine*) featured Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting Missy Mazzoli's Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres), Jean Sibelius' Violin Concerto featuring violin soloist Simone Porter, concluding with Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 2.

Classical Set 5 (*Riveting Rachmaninoff*) featured Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong conducting Ludwig van Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3, First Symphony Project composer Matthew Browne's Symphony

No. 1, *The Course of Empire* and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 with acclaimed piano soloist Natasha Paremski.

The presentation of the final two Classical Series concert sets, Set 6 (*Showcasing Contemporary Women*) and Set 7 (*Visions of Hope*), were compromised by the COVID-19 virus, resulting in the cancellation/postponement/rescheduling of Classical Series Sets 6 and 7, as well as Family Series Set 3 and Symphony Pops Series Set 4.

In light of these cancellations, Francesco Lecce-Chong has been active keeping symphony patrons connected online. During March and April, Francesco hosted over 20 watch parties by curating great performances to watch online, introducing the music, and interacting with viewers during the performances. Currently, Francesco and his fiancée, Chloe, host an educational series on Mondays ("Musical Mondays") and a more casual hang out on Thursdays ("Thursday Night Live") on both Facebook and Youtube. Recent episodes have included interviews with SRS musicians, including Rebecca Roudman and Elizabeth Prior with many more in the works for this summer.

In addition to the Classical Series, the Santa Rosa Symphony presented the following programs and events during the 2019-20 season:

- The SRS presented the seventh season of the Family Concert Series, with two Sunday matinee performances, the first conducted by Music Director, Francesco Lecce-Chong, and the second conducted by SRS Youth Orchestra conductor Bobby Rogers.

The first program, *Halloween with Harry Potter*, with Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong, featured the Santa Rosa Children's Choral Academy, directed by Carol Menke. The production was compromised by the Kincaid Fire in Sonoma County, and the closure of Weill Hall. The production was postponed and rescheduled from October 27th to January 5th.

The second program, *Peter and the Wolf*, with SRS Youth Orchestra conductor Bobby Rogers, featured young actors from the local children's theater company, Roustabout Theater, directed by Clark Lewis.

The third program, *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*, featuring Classical Kids Live, was compromised by the COVID-19 virus, resulting in the cancellation, postponement and rescheduling of the production until the 2020-21 season.

Along with the interactive Instrument Petting Zoo and photo booth in the lobby, the Family Concert Series has been an essential audience development program for younger audience members' enjoyment of and appreciation for classical music.

- Led by the admired Principal Pops Conductor Michael Berkowitz, the Symphony Pops Series in collaboration with the Luther Burbank Center presented three successful programs. The first program, *Symphonic Sinatra!*, featured the charismatic Brian Duprey and his trio performing a tribute to Frank Sinatra. The second Holiday Pops program, *Holly Jolly Pops*, featured local vocalists Clairdee and Ned Rifkin, the Santa Rosa Symphonic Chorus, directed by Robert Hazelrigg and Roustabout Theater. The third program, *Bond and Beyond*, featured vocalists Laura Dickenson and Ned Rifkin.

The fourth program, *Remember When Rock Was Young – The Elton John Tribute*, was compromised by the COVID-19 virus, resulting in the cancellation, postponement and rescheduling of the production until the 2020-21 season.

The Symphony Pops Series has developed a loyal audience that enjoys and appreciates the authenticity of Michael Berkowitz and his music library, the enthusiastic performances by the orchestra and the quality of the guest artists.

The Luther Burbank Center has continued to make great strides for the comfort and enjoyment of the patrons by making improvements to the facility, e.g., completion of the outdoor patio and restoration of the Atrium that was damaged by the Tubbs Fire.

- Due to the COVID-19 virus, the two Free Concerts for Youth were postponed from October 28th to January 9th. Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong conducted excerpts from Family Set 1, including music from the Harry Potter film series by John Williams. The enthusiastic narration provided by Maestro Lecce-Chong added immensely to the enjoyment of the program by the young student audiences and their teachers.
- Several guest artists appearing on the Classical Series also performed recital programs and masterclasses:

A gala honoring Sonoma County Historian, Gaye LeBaron, featured pianist Garrick Ohlsson performing an intimate recital in the Weill Hall with the audience members seated on stage.

Due to the Kincade Fire, a private recital for major donors by banjo soloist Béla Fleck that was to be hosted by SRS board member David Stare at Dry Creek Vineyard was instead hosted at the home of SRS emeritus board member Nancy Berto and her husband David Berto.

Simone Porter presented a masterclass for members of the SRS Youth Orchestra at Sheppard Accelerated Elementary School.

SRS principal harpist, Dan Levitan, performed a recital at the Vintners Inn/John Ash & Co. for the annual Heritage Society luncheon.

SRS board member Sara Kozel hosted a private recital in her home by pianist Natasha Paremski.

- The SRS was again engaged for the sixth consecutive year by Sonoma State University performing an Independence Day July Fourth concert with vocalists from Transcendence Theatre Company, conducted by SRS Principal Pops Conductor Michael Berkowitz, and followed by a spectacular fireworks display.
- A season highlight was the sixth annual Free Community Concert, *The Four Seasons of Sonoma County*, featuring Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong and SRS violinists, Joseph Edelberg, Karen Shinozaki Sor and Michelle Maruyama, performing Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. The Museum of Sonoma County curated photographs submitted by residents of Sonoma County in a slide-show presentation during the performance. The continued co-production with Sonoma State University substantially minimizes the production expenses for the Santa Rosa Symphony.
- The ongoing collaborative community outreach program presented by the Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma County Library featured performances at regional libraries throughout Sonoma County for children and adults by SRS ensembles.

Due to the COVID-19 virus resulting in the unavailability of the GMC, auditions for orchestra vacancies planned for May 2020 were cancelled. Auditions shall be scheduled as soon as possible for the following orchestra vacancies:

- Principal Trumpet
- Principal Contrabass
- Section Second Violin (Seat 12)
- Section Viola (Seats 6, 7 and 8)
- Section Contrabass (Seat 4)

Union Contracts in Place for Five Years

The Santa Rosa Symphony Association successfully renegotiated collective bargaining agreements with the American Federation of Musicians Local 6 on behalf of the orchestra, and with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 16 for the stagehands. The negotiations were harmonious for the most part, and were indicative of the mutual respect that exists between the Association and the two Unions. The long-term, five-year agreements shall provide greater stability and financial certainty in future seasons. Moreover, the agreement was modified to include a standard force majeure clause that had been previously overlooked and was necessarily invoked due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact.

Santa Rosa Symphony Institute for Music Education

The Santa Rosa Symphony Institute for Music Education consists of 5 component programs:

- Training Young Musicians – 5 youth ensembles, summer music academy
- Music for our Schools-Free Concerts For Youth, It's Elementary, Primarily Classical
- Simply Strings
- Family oriented programs- family concert series, discovery dress rehearsals
- Adult Education - open dress rehearsals, pre-concert talks, radio broadcasts, master classes
- Online programs added in response to COVID-19 program cancellations

Fiscally speaking, FY 20 earned education revenues came in at \$208,750, 10.3% under budget; however expenses fell even further by 11.1% to \$550,457. Moreover, our education programs continue to generate donor interest and support, spurring donations of \$584,483, an admirable increase during a truncated season no less than 4.5% over FY19.

Ebb and Flow of Training Young Musicians

Training includes the four Youth Ensembles, the String Orchestra Workshop (SOW), and the Summer Music Academy (SMA).

We met or exceeded enrollment goals for all but two of the youth ensembles, Debut (at 40 fell 6 short of goal) and Aspirante (at 50 fell 2 short of goal) Youth Orchestras with the overall total reaching 203, one past the goal of 202. However, the revenue of \$92,828 lagged behind the budgeted goal of \$98,337.

We began the season with Summer Music Academy at a wonderful new facility, Sonoma Academy. Revenue was lower than budgeted (budgeted: \$91,508; actual: \$87,051) due to lower enrollment (30 fewer students) but expenses were much lower, resulting in a surplus over budget. This was the most dynamic camp yet.

Concert performance fees reached budget while program ad sales missed the goal by \$292. The main Education fundraiser, Practice-a-thon, was interrupted by the Kincaide fire and had to be extended in order to reach the goal of \$9,000. Parents showed their support of the programs by contributing to the Education Family Community Fund, and they organized a bake sale at the Debut and Aspirante Youth Orchestras Fall Concert.

String Orchestra enrollment increased over last year, with many students from Summer Music Academy. When classes were cancelled due to COVID-19, String Orchestra Workshop instructors provided online lessons for their young musicians.

Luis Zuniga began his first season as conductor of Debut Youth Orchestra. Dana Sadava, conductor of Aspirante Youth Orchestra, resigned just before the season opened. Jennifer Huang, assistant conductor of the U.C. Berkeley orchestra, was selected and began her tenure in December. Bobby Rogers stepped in as AYO interim conductor and also served as conductor of the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Debut and Aspirante Youth Orchestras performed a stellar concert in November. Debut Youth Orchestra again traveled to Napa to perform with Napa Youth Orchestra. Both orchestras performed for schoolchildren at elementary schools in Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Aspirante Youth Orchestra held a solo competition in January. During the shelter-in-place, Debut and Aspirante Youth Orchestra members had regular online gatherings with their conductors, talking about music, sharing shelter-at-home experiences, and trading tips for practicing music.

The Young People's Chamber Orchestra, directed by SRSYE alumnus Aaron Westman, had 17 members. Rehearsals were at Summerfield Waldorf School with performances at Fountaingrove Lodge, Cloverdale Performing Arts Center, Sebastopol Library and Phoenix Theater in Petaluma. The YPCO season was completed just before shelter-in-place. The spring program included a piece by Carolyn Shaw that Francesco noted he has programmed with SRS for next season. The concert featured the first offering of the Institute's First Opus Project, a composition by YPCO cellist, Jordan Hendrickson. Echoing the Santa Rosa Symphony's First Symphony Project, this initiative allows young composers to create new compositions for young musicians and emphasizes the important connection between the composer, conductor and musician in the creation of a new work.

The SRSYO Chamber Players, a chamber ensemble program created to give SRSYO wind, brass and percussion musicians ensemble experience, performed at the Sing-along Messiah and at Macy's throughout the Christmas season, in the lobby of the Green Music Center before Santa Rosa Symphony concerts, and for two run-outs. The Percussion Ensemble performed at the Gala where one of the percussionists, Katya Lynch, gave an eloquent talk about her experience in the youth ensembles. A second year planned for May of *Music Around Town*, an opportunity for chamber groups to perform for the public, was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra season began with a retreat at CYO Retreat Center in Occidental. The first concert of the season was with the "Mobility," the United States Air Force rock band, at Sonoma Country Day School in a concert honoring the First Responders on the 2nd anniversary of the Tubbs Fire. At the November Concert at the Green Music Center, a Resolution from the State of California celebrating this 60th anniversary season was read to the audience. The Showcase Recital at Sebastopol Center for the Arts on January 17, a benefit for the SRS Institute for Music Education, was astounding in its professionalism and range.

A virtual concert was planned when shelter-in-place prevented the SRSYO from performing its May 9 concert. Over the course of two and a half months, the students learned chamber music. They recorded their pieces remotely and Matt Payne and a parent volunteer edited a video.

This afforded the student musicians a brand new way of creating music. The result was The SRS Youth Orchestra Virtual Chamber Music Concert, an 80 minute performance launched on Facebook and YouTube on May 20. The event attracted 2,061 views, with 1,396 unique people watching. Family members of the student musicians were able to tune in from Colombia, Chicago, three cities in Mexico and New York. The event raised over \$7,000 in online donations, more than meeting a donor match. The exuberant finale, a commissioned fanfare for brass and percussion by SRSYO alumnus Michael Murrin, was the second composition in the Education Department's First Opus project.

Final Stults Family Instrument Scholarship

Kenneth Stults completed his last grant fund for an instrument scholarship to be awarded to a worthy SRSYO musician this season. This year's recipient was Miranda Ronan, a 16-year old violinist who intends to pursue a career in music. The winner is required to commit to at least one additional year participation in the SRSYO. With the \$10,000 award plus some additional support from friends and family, Miranda was able to buy a violin and bow.

Virtual Summer Music Course

With our young musicians sheltered in place, a special, affordable, four-week summer online course was offered and well received. The curriculum includes two levels of music theory (Beginning and Intermediate/Advanced), and a seminar on Music Appreciation and Practice Techniques that is suitable for all levels. Faculty are conductors Luis Zuniga (Debut Youth Orchestra), Jennifer Huang (Aspirante Youth Orchestra) and Aaron Westman (Young People's Chamber Orchestra). While this was initially intended for students in the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Ensembles as well as for young musicians who might be interested in joining one of the ensembles in the future, some adults signed up as well. Their enthusiasm for the course suggests this might be something to consider for the future.

Special Training by Special Guests

SRS Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong visited every ensemble at least once, conducting and rehearsing each of them. Simone Porter, guest violinist with Santa Rosa Symphony, gave a masterclass at Simply Strings January 9, performing for them and working with the Chamber Group and with SRSYO violinist Aiden Seaver. Composer Matt Browne gave a workshop February 8 for budding young composers from the youth ensembles.

Music For Our Schools Perseveres

The SRS sent small music ensembles to perform at 32 assemblies at elementary schools in Santa Rosa and Petaluma. We were delighted to be able to get them all in before the shelter-in-place order.

Our IGNITE! program, now in its fourth season, is designed to assist teachers in Sonoma County schools in learning how to teach the recorder. We loaned over 1000 recorders to our It's Elementary partners and were well on our way to performing at the April IGNITE concert when the shelter-in-place thwarted that momentum. Throughout the season, an audience of 3,085 attended Free Concerts For Youth, down considerably from the previous year because the Kincaid Fire postponed the first concert to January and COVID-19 forced cancellation of the April 30 concert.

It's Elementary has continued this year to provide a 2-year-long suite of music education opportunities and services to six deserving Sonoma County elementary schools, reaching over 2,600 students in Santa Rosa, Two Rock and Petaluma. The program offered teacher enrichment workshops on integrating music into their classrooms, assemblies with professional ensembles of SRS musicians and a full orchestra from the youth ensembles, a daily listening program, free admission to the Discovery Rehearsal Series, access to lesson plans and classroom activities, and first access to reserve seats at the Free Concerts For Youth.

The Elementary School Listening Program reached 10,154 students in 446 classrooms in 28 schools, representing a slight growth in the number of schools but a slight decline in number of students reached over FY19.

With the exception of Free Concerts For Youth with its IGNITE! performance, all Music For Our Schools programs were completed for the season before shelter-in-place closed schools. During the shelter-in-place, the Elementary School Listening Program continued and was expanded to include more integrative arts content to assist the teachers as they switched to remote learning. This continued support was met with enthusiasm, highlighting the role Music For Schools plays in the community.

Simply Strings: Rough Beginning, Strong Ending

Inspired by *El Sistema*, Venezuela's acclaimed social action music network, our Simply Strings program continues its partnership with Sheppard Accelerated Elementary School in Roseland. This was the seventh year of the program and the second year of its expansion to include middle school. 2nd-8th grade students received free, after-school instruction in violin, viola, cello or bass, and in general music, five days a week for 24 weeks. A change in curriculum is helping kids move on to other SRS youth ensemble. Pre-Orchestra, at 22 children, was the largest incoming class yet. As middle school enrollment continued to decline, a decision was made to extend the program to first graders next season.

The program got off to a rocky administrative start, following the October departure of a manager hired in April who turned out to be a poor fit for the program. Director of Education, Wendy Cilman, served as Interim Manager for the first session with significant help from Robert Bowman who took over from Andrew Emer as Head of Faculty. Kate Matwychuk was hired as both Simply Strings Manager and Summer Music Academy Manager in January.

The first recital was postponed due to the Kincaide Fire, but we were able to extend the program by one week and Piner High School was available for a recital one week later. During the second session, some adjustments were made to curriculum by Robert Bowman resulting noticeable student improvement. The March recital had to be relocated when the Piner High School auditorium was shut down due to a lighting issue. We were fortunate to be able to move the event to Maria Carillo High School.

Kate has had a powerful impact on the program. Gathering the faculty together early in her tenure, she clearly explained her vision and asked for their input. The result was an exceptionally cohesive, creative team that was able to pivot to online learning when the shelter-in-place orders cancelled in-person rehearsals. The resulting YouTube videos, from every faculty member, testify to the high level of teaching talent of this faculty.

Renewable Energy –Market Volatility for Endowment & Operational Success

Our endowment fund was fully invested and continued to be overseen by TWP Wealth Management based in San Francisco. Their recommendations were impacted by a volatile stock market rocked by the COVID-19 pandemic from February through end of this fiscal year. Even though, as of May 31, 2020, the TWP investment team had generated only a small, negative endowment return of -1.60%, comparable to the benchmark of -1.57% with the value of our endowment at \$13,671,698 as of May 31, 2020 which represents a 4.8% increase over May 31, 2019.

Keep in mind that the returns below include not only return on market results but also take into account management fees, unrestricted estate gifts and endowment draws.

Actual FY20 to date (May 31): -\$701,096

FY19: -\$200,096 (as of 5/31/19)

During my eighteen seasons here, we have never taken the full 5% draw allowed under SRS policy. We've drawn from the endowment on a quarterly basis as needed to support operations. This fiscal year we drew 2.5% from the endowment (plus the required distribution from two restricted funds). As of May 31, 2020, overall, our balance sheet (unaudited) assets have grown by 5.2% in one year to \$19,845,079 from \$18,856,194. Efficient financial administration by the previous Director of Finance & Administration Judy Bruce and solid financial controls in place was verified by our accounting firm – Dillwood, Burkel & Millar – with a clean FY 19 audit evaluation.

On the annual operating side, it was expected that FY20 would receive lower donations, but projected growth in ticket sales with added concerts and Francesco Lecce-Chong in his first full season. However, anticipated higher expenses exceeding increased revenues, would rely on a bigger draw from endowment. The result was, as we entered our 92nd season, a Board approved small budget deficit of 1.3% at negative -\$61,288.

Given the wholly unexpected impact of COVID-19 pandemic closing down the organization's performances and educational services from mid-March to end of June, one might expect a much worse fiscal outcome. Yet that is not the case. A PPP loan from the federal government of \$480,167 was obtained through enormous effort by our Exchange Bank lender, new Finance Director Kathleen Gebhardt and myself that allowed hired musicians and staff to be fully paid during this time. Furthermore, the rapid deployment to reschedule the cancelled eight concerts into FY 21, pushed out expenses, stopped the flow of refunds, and met with agreement by major donors.

These actions produced a drop in budgeted revenues by only 5.7%; whereas expenses are expected to drop 16.5% for FY20. The result, I am proud to say, more than ever before, is that we now expect to end this fiscal year with a substantial operating surplus, that will not require any further draws from the endowment and will prepare us well for a most certainly uncertain fiscal future.

Development Summary: Ending Strong in Spite of Challenges

The Development Department raised more than \$2 million for a third year running, reaching an impressive \$2,225,576 in contributed income for the 2019-2020 year. This was accomplished in spite of the extraordinary realities of the Coronavirus Pandemic, which forced the cancellation of fundraisers and rescheduling of concerts to which over \$190,000 in funding was attached. Had these adjustments not been necessary, this year would have been a new record in fundraising for a third year in a row.

The year included several new records, as we exceeded budget goals in nearly all categories and skillfully executed campaigns that inspired confidence in the Symphony's service to our community.

Celebration 2019

Our annual gala celebrated the beloved community icon, Gaye LeBaron. The event was a heartwarming, festive kick-off to the season, and didn't fail to demonstrate in fundraising success the deep love our donors have for the Symphony's collective past and present impact in the community. Our guests and sponsors for this celebration contributed to continuing a six-year upward trajectory in net revenue, surpassing budget expectations and making this the highest grossing gala in our history.

FY20 Actual: \$387,625 with a net of \$351,907

FY20 Budget: \$339,770

Individual Giving Remains Strong

In yet another year of disasters, our individual donors remain the committed core of support for the Santa Rosa Symphony in trying times. Despite the Kincade Fire, we end the year 11% over our budget goal for individual giving.

The greatest number of our individual donors give with their season subscription renewals. Each year, we follow those season subscription renewals in the fall with an Annual Appeal to those individuals who haven't yet donated toward the current season. Just two years prior, in 2017, we cancelled our Annual Appeal in the wake of the Sonoma Complex Fires.

This year, as the Kincade Fire still burned, we rewrote our appeal. It not only raised the second highest total revenue of annual appeals in recent years, bringing in \$11,090 but also garnered the highest average amount per donation.

The Coronavirus Pandemic forced the cancellation of our fifth annual Breakfast Fundraiser for Education, where we had budgeted to raise about \$23,000 in individual donations.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$937,328

FY20 Budget: \$843,832

Board Giving Leads the Way

The board has time and again shown its steadfast commitment to the Symphony's mission, its health and its progress. The board both exceeded expectations and maintained giving over the half-million mark. This inspiring devotion and leadership demonstrates the board's role as a mainstay of our fiscal vitality which continued to account for some of this year's largest gifts and show the board's clarity of its core mission.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$536,365

FY20 Budget: \$504,332

Foundation Grants a Consistent Element of Success

Foundation grants this year maintained a strong position relative to our history. Significant grants from the Finley Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, Miranda Lux Foundation and the Kimball Foundation helped us surpass our budget goal and maintain this critical aspect of our contributed revenues.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$272,000

FY20 Budget: \$254,000

Corporate Giving Reverting to the Mean

After the last two years of an historically high water mark for corporate giving, mostly due to a multi-year gift from an anonymous donor, we have seen remarkable change in this category, ultimately resulting in just 69% of our budgeted goal. The total corporate contributed revenue is still well above our historical average for years in which we do not have a Youth Orchestra Tour.

This year, we set ambitious goals for corporate giving based upon new artistic ventures in which we perceived great promise for corporate interest. That interest was significantly less than anticipated.

We also have the extraordinary need to move some of our largest corporate gifts out of the current year and into the coming year due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. These include gifts from Viking Cruises, AmaWaterways and PG&E.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$183,832

FY20 Budget: \$264,989

Government Grants Stay Strong

Following on last year's record high for government support, we once again did well in this category, ending 23% over budget goal.

County funding has been our largest source of government funding for years, and that has been in turmoil in recent years. We have been able to count on \$50,000 or more annually through the Board of Supervisors, county agency Creative Sonoma and, most significantly the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds. This year, our TOT funding dropped by a third, and we anticipate that it will drop to zero in the coming year in light of continuing community challenges, though some notable funding will continue through Creative Sonoma.

Another major source of government support increasing in recent years has been the California Arts Council, from whom we have received consistently increasing grants for several years.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$120,150

FY20 Budget: \$97,000

The League Shows Its Heart

Presenting an array of delightful fundraiser events throughout the season, the Symphony's devoted volunteer association, the Santa Rosa Symphony League, supports us not only with fundraisers but by caring for and lifting up our musicians with delicious food at rehearsal breaks. Their deep care for our Education program, for our musicians and every person in the organization is a beacon of light year round. Their support this fiscal year was the highest since 2003.

FY20 Actual to date (May 31): \$35,800

FY20 Budget: \$35,500

Marketing Summary

Classical Series Ticket Sales on track for another Record-breaking Season Before COVID-19

Prior to the pandemic, TOTAL classical series ticket revenues (including the sat/sun/mon/disc performances combined), reached \$1,124,300—that, while short of budget goal by 2.3% --was actually \$17,300 above last season's combined revenues for all seven classical concerts! If it had not been for the pandemic and the postponement of the final two sets, the 2019/20 season would have been the third consecutive season of increasing ticket revenues.

After postponing the March and May performances to FY21, associated revenues were also moved to FY21, thus earned income concluded with Set 5 with combined revenues of \$869,700—a shortfall of \$281,300 to the original, 7-concert budget. However, when comparing the budget of Sets 1-5 with actuals of Sets 1-5, the news is positive: actuals of \$869,700 were 4.8% higher than the budget of \$829,600 of those five concert sets.

For the SECOND consecutive season, subscription ticket revenues (all package types combined) were higher than the previous season—until the pandemic and the postponement of Classical Sets 6 and 7 to FY21. The number of Full Series packages sold was up 3.67% with an increase in revenues of 3.67%. However, four-concert Mini Series package sales and revenues were down from FY19 in both packages sold (-5.74%) and revenues (-1.16%). The Discovery and Flex package types each experienced a decrease.

Another FY20 stand-out (like FY19) is that single ticket revenue for the Sat/Sun/Mon seven programs had exceeded the total budget goal by \$1,500—with two concerts not yet performed! Comparing Sets 1-5 budget to actuals, the number of tickets sold exceeded budget by 784 tickets and \$42,700 in revenue!

However, after moving the two concerts to next season (along with those associated tickets), there is certainly a deficit shortfall: FY20 original budget: 4,200 tickets (compared to 3,000 sets 1-5) and \$194,700 budget revenue (compared to \$180,600). Unfortunately, last season's record-breaking season for single ticket revenues, was on track to be exceeded in FY20!

This represents (was) continued turn-around in sales during FY20:

Total Classical Series Revenues: FY13 \$1,369,500 – First Year in GMC highest ever revenues
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY14 \$1,224,400, decline of 10.6%
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY15 \$1,195,168, decline of 2.4%
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY16 \$1,158,430, decline of 3.1%
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY17 \$1,058,912, decline of 8.6%
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY18 \$1,068,046, increase of 0.86%
Total Classical Series Revenues: FY19 \$1,112,854, increase of 4.2%
Total Classical Series Revenues before Pandemic FY20: \$1,124,300, increase of 1.0%
Total Classical Series Revenues after concerts rescheduled: \$869,700, decline of 2.2%

Average Sold Occupancy for 2012-2013: 87.3% – First Year in GMC highest ever revenues
Average Sold Occupancy for 2013-2014: 73.2%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2014-2015: 72.4%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2015-2016: 69.0%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2016-2017: 64.6%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2017-2018: 65.8%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2018-2019: 72.3%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2019-2020 before Pandemic: 72.24%
Average Sold Occupancy for 2019-2020 of Sets 1-5: 78.67%

The increase in single tickets can be attributed to the appealing programming as well as Francesco Lecce-Chong's strong appeal.

It appeared that SRS encountered less direct competition from Weill Hall programming though they continue to present classical artists which impact SRS ticket sales.

Groups Sales Program Expands

Continuing one of the Stanford ACT team's audience development recommendations, the marketing department increased its efforts in securing more group sales in FY20. An attractive brochure was again created and used to stimulate single ticket sales to and service organizations. For this second season of the program, we welcomed back a couple of groups: Wild Oak Saddle Club, Rotary Club of Santa Rosa Sunrise and an individual patron for nearly 109 group sales tickets sold. There were four new groups who joined us this season. They were: Developing Girls School; Windsor Senior Center; Sonoma County Women's Group; and Jim Hinton's band, New Horizons; for an additional 79 tickets sold. Combined, FY20 realized 188 group sales tickets compared to 105 in FY19 - a 79% increase. Revenues saw an even larger increase as some groups selected higher priced seats. Revenues increased from \$4,030 to \$6,023—a 49% increase.

Social Media Continues to Reach Larger Audiences

For the second season in a row, our social media presence again saw substantial increases due to our continued contract with Potluck Consulting—even with the postponement of two classical and one family concert. Total Facebook likes by the end of May were 2,654 — a 56.03% increase from last May. Facebook average page impressions, including all paid ad impressions, is up from an average of 36,944 impressions from August through May last season to 69,578 impressions from August through

May this season—an 88.33% increase. Instagram followers are up by 307 (34.97% increase) since last May, and Instagram post impressions for the August through May season are up from a monthly average of 6,940 last season to an average of 9,598 this season—a 38.31% increase. Twitter, which has historically been a slow-growing platform increased in followers from last May by 39—a 5.24% increase. Twitter impressions for the August to May season averaged 8,170 a month last season and had an average of 7,821 this season—a 4.28% decrease. This season, we began boosting/promoting posts on Facebook and Instagram, increased the regularity of event ads, created trailers for concerts, and started using IGTV. Overall, we have maintained very strong engagement rates on non-boosted/promoted content on Facebook and Instagram, and paid ads have become increasingly cost-effective this season. Web traffic from social sources has increased from averaging 1,173 sessions a month last season to 1,475 a month this season—a 25.79% increase!

Free Community Concert Presents a Dynamic New Format with Vivaldi's, The Four Seasons of Sonoma County

A very special event of the 2019-2020 season was the successful joint presentation by the SRS and the GMC of the sixth free concert for the entire community. This season, the SRS and GMC partnered with Museum of Sonoma County to solicit photographic images of our county which were curated into a slide presentation shown during the orchestra's performance of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. This was a truly memorable event and drew a lot of interest.

Symphony Pops Series Ticket Sales Falter

SRS celebrated its 15th Symphony Pops Series with Michael Berkowitz, Principal Pops Conductor, in collaboration with the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, leveraging their marketing/advertising reach, and our concert production expertise. Prior to the pandemic, total tickets sold for FY20 were 4,924, just 31 seats shy of last year's total tickets sold, though still more than 300 seats short of the budget. Since Pops 4 was postponed to FY21, total revenues for the three concerts performed reached \$192,248—a shortfall of more than \$10,300 to the budget for the three performances. This was due mostly to the Pops 3 concert underperforming. There was a lot of optimism that the forth Pops concert would sell well due to the program, and was already on-track to be the best selling Pops performance of the season.

Family Series Experiences a Substantial Rise in Ticket Sales

The eighth season of the Symphony's Family Concert Series saw large increases in both ticket sales and revenues. Prior to the pandemic, ticket sales were already up 51% with revenues up 40% when compared to FY19 totals (FY20 Family 3 had not yet taken place). This astounding increase was due to Francesco's strong interest in family concerts, his programming for this season, as well as his conducting of the first concert in the series. Since the final concert was postponed to FY21, total revenues were \$36,900 for the first two Family concerts, a 17% shortfall in revenues compared to the three concert budget—but when compared to the budget for Family 1 and 2 only—ticket revenues were 25% more than anticipated!

Summer Performances in Weill Hall

The seventh outdoor summer season of concerts began this fiscal year at Weill Hall with Sonoma State University presenting. We were again successful in negotiating a flat fee for our return of a July 4 tradition. For the first time, SSU and SRS collaborated on a successful co-production of a showing of the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in Concert with the SRS orchestra performing the score live. This film has wide appeal and was enthusiastically received. This additional event gave the SRS orchestra an opportunity to participate in the GMC summer line-up with a performance to a very large audience with over 2,800 tickets sold for \$102,425.

Looking Ahead

For 92 years, the Santa Rosa Symphony has valued its role in making a difference in the life of its community. The success of our organization has not been accidental or haphazard. It has been based on artistic and educational excellence, fiscal ingenuity and community engagement. Intangible assets like trust, good decision-making, artistic and managerial expertise, reputation and relationships, a positive organizational culture, and the quality of the board, staff and orchestra all have influenced our performance.

Moreover, our accomplishments have reflected a balance of steadfastness in mission and vision alignment with the capacity to adapt as needed. That adaptive capability will be tested, as never before, with the ongoing uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, and will require a learning orientation where we are willing to modify programming and operations in response to feedback and new information.

Such uncertainty is further exacerbated by external changes that affect our climate, severe economic disruptions, tax-deductibility of contributions, regular threats to the elimination of public arts funding, and changing consumer preferences that favor digital, on-demand consumption.

So to ‘plan and adjust’ will be our mantra. In the face of such enormous uncertainty, future changes will likely ask more of us and offer more to us. Asking us to be more transparent, compassionate and vulnerable than ever before, testing new alternative scenarios, and offering us to reimagine our model of how we engage and interact with our stakeholders. Though the path to such change may be murky, let us never forget the one thing that is absolutely clear – our music has been and always will be an essential antidote to the trauma of our times.

Until we are together again,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Silow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Alan" and "Silow" being capitalized and prominent.

Alan Silow
President and CEO