# REPORT

2023-2024





#### A CELEBRATION OF YOUR GENEROSITY

Thanks to you, our 76th season of service through music has been inspiring. We made music for nearly 30,000 audience members and **served 25,000 children in their classrooms**. We brought outstanding conductors and dazzling soloists to the stage, while making sure each had the chance to impart knowledge and share their skill with student throughout Greenville County.

And we're thrilled to report that thousands across the region are experiencing the wonder of our orchestra for the first time, in bookstores, breweries, at TD Saturday Market, an arena, a baseball stadium, and more! The music made by our orchestra resonates far beyond the concert hall.

Each time I join our musicians for a visit to a classroom or library, the wonder and curiosity in the faces of the children takes me back to my first memories of music. The memory is vivid and evokes so much emotion—the powerful sound of symphonic music made me feel like anything was possible. Many of you have similar stories: **childhood encounters with music can change us forever.** 

Your generosity nourishes our creative spark and ensures we can continue to offer inspiring experiences like these to children and adults across our community. **Every dollar you've invested helps us share the power of music**, and its impact is accounted for here.

What follows is a celebration of all the ways you've helped us add value to daily life in our community. Take a moment to read and absorb the many firsts. Take pride in our symphony's excellence and innovation. Be amazed by the sheer volume of what we've accomplished together.

We're going to keep expanding, dreaming and innovating because **your partnership gives us the fuel** to do so.

With Gratitude,

Jessica Satava, Executive Director Greenville Symphony

#### SYMPHONY ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Ashley Addison, Production Manger

Grace Butler, Donor Relations Coordinator

Derek Eilert, Orchestra Librarian and Operations Associate

Angie Jones, Orchestra Operations and Personnel Director

Taylor Keeter, Marketing and Communications Manager

Lieshe Lane, Director of Development

Jennifer Mullins, Office Manager and Board Liaison

**Anh Nguyen**, Marketing Intern

Jessica Satava, Executive Director

Natasia Simmons, Artistic Operations Intern

Anneka Zuehlke-King, Education and Community Programs Manager

#### 2023-24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cathy Jones - President
Matthew W. Couvillion - Vice President
Kasel Kennerly Knight - Secretary

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Rick Blackwell
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Yoshi Kirsch

Debbie Paden Mobley
Joanna Mulfinger
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Diane Perlmutter
Susan C. Priester
Gary Robinson
XiaoLi Saliny
Jeff Schmersal
Jocelyn Thomas
Kurt Wallenborn
John Warner
Burl F. Williams

Deborah York

# STORIES FROM OUR SEVENTY-SIXTH YEAR OF MUSIC

#### **NEW CONCERTMASTER JACQUELINE TSO**

This season, we welcomed violinist Jacqueline Tso to the Greenville Symphony family as our concertmaster! She moved to Greenville last summer from St. Louis, where she played with the St. Louis Symphony. Audiences delighted in her playing in featured solo passages with the orchestra all season long and came to anticipate her appearance on stage at the beginning of each concert. We look forward to her debut as soloist in Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* in the spring of 2025. Jackie holds the Leila Cunningham Roe Concertmaster Chair.

#### SYMPHONY SERVES AT SUMMER CAMPS!

Did you know Greenville Symphony musicians provide free and fun music programs for kids in Greenville summer camps? Our woodwind quintet and narrator Taylor Keeter performed *Peter and the Wolf* for hundreds of students at camps hosted by the Carolina Literacy Project, Christ Church Creative Arts Camp, and Instruments of Praise at Long Branch Baptist Church. Camps received materials for a music-themed craft project and each child got a copy of the *Peter and the Wolf* book to take home. This initiative was made possible by the South Carolina Arts Commission.

# 6 CONDUCTORS, 6 EXPERIENCES: WHO WILL LEAD THE GREENVILLE SYMPHONY?

A unique and exciting season unfolded before our eyes as our musicians, board, subscribers, and staff accepted the challenge to choose one from six outstanding candidates to become the next music director of the Greenville Symphony. The audition process brought us an array of musical experiences from diverse genres with outstanding soloists.

# GREENVILLE SYMPHONY BRASS AT THE DRIVE: JULY 4TH AT FLUOR FIELD

What's better than patriotic brass at a baseball game on the fourth of July? The Greenville Symphony Brass Choir was honored to be the featured musicians for The Greenville Drive's Military Appreciation Day game. Their appearance was sponsored by Franklin Real Estate Development and Creative Builders.







#### MUSICIAN HOSTS OPEN THEIR HOMES FOR ARTISTS

30 Greenville County families open their homes to Greenville Symphony musicians throughout the season. This program allows us to attract the best musicians from the region and forge strong relationships in the community. Our host families offer a bathroom and bedroom for a few days during a concert cycle to a musician and delight in seeing their artist onstage with the orchestra during the concerts! It's a delight to see the friendships that are formed as a result of this initiative. Would you like to participate? You can host as much or as little as your schedule allows, and no season-long commitment is required. Hosts receive special benefits and recognition. Contact jennifer@greenvillesymphony.org for details!

#### MUSIC IN THE GRAY LOFT

The newest chamber music offering of the Greenville Symphony enjoyed a strong start, as hundreds of music-lovers joined our principal musicians for hour-long concerts in an inspiring loft space at Greenville Center for Creative Arts. Patrons chose between a midday concert complete with lunches provided by Project Host or an after-work performance with wine to enjoy with the music. Stay tuned for announcements about more of these engaging encounters with our musicians and their artistry.

#### **GROWING SYMPHONY SOCIAL CLUB**

Welcome to the 30 new members of our emerging professionals cohort! Formerly titled GROUP, Symphony Social Club rebranded this season, offering a full slate of unique events including a yoga class accompanied by live music with a symphony musician, a networking lunch, and an intimate coffee concert at Grateful Brew!

# EXPANDING OUR CINEMA OFFERINGS: STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE AT THE WELL

4,300 fans turned out on May the Fourth to hear the Greenville Symphony play John Williams' iconic score while the film played on the big screen. Our first official production in collaboration with Bon Secours Wellness Arena was a rousing success. The musicians enjoyed a long and enthusiastic ovation as thousands of people experienced the excellence of the Greenville Symphony for the very first time. We can't wait to present *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* in 2025. Special thanks to Ross Russo and Friends and Mimi Jenko for their support of this incredible event.



# 101 WAYS TO SERVE THROUGH MUSIC: EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Education Mission: To inspire, enrich and educate diverse listeners of all ages with concerts, mentorships, and other high-quality music programs — all free!

# 52 EdReach

interactive in-school performances

sponsored by Ann and Mike Chengrian Once Upon an Orchestra story-telling concerts for very small children.

# 12 Lollipops

music and literacy experiences at Greenville County Libraries. Lollipops has been a staple of our education programming since 1951 and is supported with volunteers from the Guild of the Greenville Symphony.

sponsored by BMW



for Title 1 schools

provided by Michelin America





# After school music afternoons with Judson Community Partnership





# Symphony Insight lectures

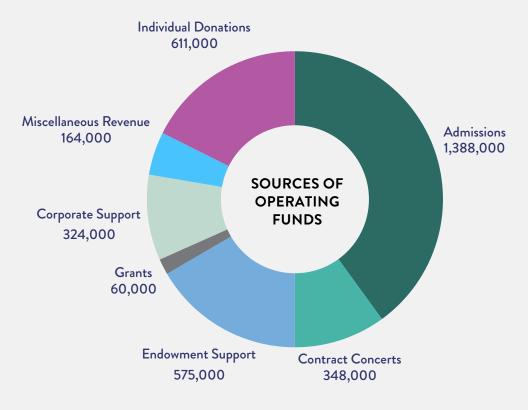
featuring guest conductors Gary Malvern and Gary Robinson youth orchestra mentoring performances

with Carolina Youth Symphony & Greenville County Youth Orchestra



#### **FUNDING THE MUSIC**

Sources and Uses for the Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 2024



#### **USES OF OPERATING FUNDS**

Program	
2,857,000	
Management and General	Fundraising
436,000	361,000

#### REACH AND RESONANCE

#### ARTISPHERE FLASHMOB

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of Artisphere, the Greenville Symphony Orchestra surprised and delighted Artisphere attendees with a flash mob performance of Maurice Ravel's epic orchestral work *Bolero*. With approximately 60 GSO musicians and 20 local Greenville students performing the piece conducted by Nsé Ekpo, this flashmob was both a celebration of Artisphere's contributions to Greenville's vibrant arts community and a demonstration of the orchestra's commitment to increasing access to the arts. This initiative was made possible by Design Strategies and Metropolitan Arts Council.

#### 10 SOLD-OUT PERFORMANCES

Help us celebrate the incredible success of our Gunter Theatre Series, Holiday at Peace and Harry Potter films! Each of these productions enjoyed sold-out houses for some or all performances. Thank you for helping spread the word. Our musicians thrive on full houses!

#### **ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR NSÉ EKPO**

We welcomed a new member of the artistic team this season! Dr. Ekpo is a member of the music faculty at South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, and is an experienced orchestral conductor who has recently returned to his home state of South Carolina after pursuing his career on the west coast. He conducted our Artisphere *Bolero* flashmob and will continue in this role in the 2024-2025 season. Our conductors are supported by the Thomas A. and Shirley W. Roe Podium Fund.

# SERVING PEOPLE AND EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH MUSICAL PARTNERSHIPS

We were honored to offer the gift of music to non-profit partners like Senior Action, Upstate Warrior Solution, Judson Community Project, the Greenville Jewish Federation, Project Host and more. It was fun to help create a special date-night experience for first responders and veterans in collaboration with Charlie Hall and Upstate Warrior Solution. We enjoyed hosting an exclusive meet and greet with Israeli conductor Yaniv Attar for the Greenville Jewish Federation. Our brass quintet added to the festive spirit of Project Host's annual holiday market. These are just a few examples of the many community connections we forged this season.



#### **ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CONCERTS**

There is nothing more energizing and inspiring than the sound of laughing, chattering children as Peace Concert Hall fills with students on the morning of our Annual Children's Concerts. This season, beatboxer and rapper Christylez Bacon joined the orchestra to tell the story of music's migration across continents and centuries in an interactive experience that delighted thousands of third-fifth graders. The joyful screams and applause were so loud that the orchestra's musicians had to wear ear protection! Support for bus transportation provided by Michelin.

#### STUDENT ATTENDANCE TRENDING UPWARD

This season, an average of 100 students joined us each Concert Hall Series weekend. The word is getting out that the Greenville Symphony offsets the cost of tickets to regular season performances for students and all Greenville County teachers and staff! With the belief that high-quality music is a key component of a good education, its an important part of our mission to ensure concerts are accessible for students of all ages. With students (anyone with valid ID) admitted for just \$5 per ticket and teachers at \$10, attendance at symphony concerts are growing every year.

# ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH OUR STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Were you greeted by a professionally dressed young person with a Greenville Symphony nametag at a recent concert? There's a good chance that was one of our Student Ambassadors! Local highschool-age musicians apply to be part of a cohort of 15-25 volunteers that support our concerts by greeting concertgoers and performing music at events and the lobby before symphony performances. They receive access to exclusive events and complimentary tickets to concerts in return for their service.

#### **CONDUCTORS WORK WITH LOCAL KIDS**

Each conductor had the opportunity to spend time in the classroom with students in Greenville County Schools during their visits! Each of our guest conductors commented on the talent of our local young musicians!





#### CELEBRATING MUSICIAN MILESTONES

The Greenville Symphony is home to a roster of 70 artists whose energy and excellence add so much to our lives and the vibrancy of our community.



#### ORCHESTRA ANNIVERSARIES



**10 YEARS** Lisa Kiser, Principal Keyboard



20 YEARS
Christina Cornell, Fourth Horn
Lisa Prodan, English Horn
Arthur Ross, Assistant Principal Viola
Anneka Zuehlke-King, Principal Horn



**30 YEARS**Robert O'Brien, Assistant Principal Cello
David Saliny, Section Cello
XiaoLi Saliny, Section Violin

#### ORCHESTRA RETIREMENTS

We're grateful for the incredible artistry, service, and leadership of two special musicians who retired this season.



38 YEARS
Gary Robinson
Section Percussion



42 YEARS
Carol Roosevelt
Section Violin











#### REMEMBERING ROBERT O'BRIEN



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CELLO JUNE 4, 1963 - MARCH 5, 2024

Robert Byron O'Brien, an extraordinary human being, collapsed on February 27th, 2024, at the end of his daily walk while listening to NPR. He died seven days later on March 5th, surrounded by his wife and his three brothers, listening to Bach.

#### INTRODUCING LEE MILLS AS MUSIC DIRECTOR







Five-time winner of the Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, Lee Mills is internationally recognized as a passionate, multifaceted and energetic conductor. In naming Mills as the 'New Artist of the Month' for March 2022, Musical America praised Mills' 'omnivorous musical temperament eager to try out highly contrasting musical styles and approaches.'

During the pandemic, Mills was an invaluable asset to the Seattle Symphony, giving dozens of performances, including the 2020 Season Opening Gala on Seattle Symphony Live, and recording multiple albums with the orchestra. Mills also was the 'hero of the hour' (Seattle Times) when he stepped in at the last minute to replace Thomas Dausgaard for a performance of Hanna Lash's world premiere double-harp concerto The *Peril of Dreams* and Amy Beach's epic *Gaelic Symphony* in November 2021, about which Thomas May wrote in Musical America, 'Mills emerged in his element here, showing an obvious fondness for this epic, unjustifiably neglected score. Along with a compelling dramatic arc, he elicited characterful playing for the many solos that enrich it.'

In the fall of 2022, Mills was the Solti Foundation U.S. Resident at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he worked with maestro Enrique Mazzola on the Lyric's production of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. The League of American Orchestras selected Mills for the 2018 Bruno Walter National Conductors Preview where he conducted the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, and in 2017 Mills was selected as a semi-finalist in both the Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition and the Opera Royal de Wallonie-Liege International Opera Conducting Competition. In addition, he conducted alongside David Robertson in the highly acclaimed U.S. Premiere of John Cage's Thirty Pieces for Five Orchestras with the Saint Louis Symphony.

In addition to his work with the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra and the Seattle Symphony, he has also led concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Naples Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra (USA), the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, among others. In 2014, Mills was the Assistant Conductor to David Robertson for Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the USA.

Through his project Vibe Sinfônica, initiated in 2018 in partnership with nightlife producer The Week Group in São Paulo, he has brought classical music to thousands of new listeners through performances in unusual settings. In their inaugural performance, Vibe Sinfônica performed music of Vivaldi at The Week Group's 14th anniversary in São Paulo, playing to a crowd of over 10,000 EDM fans and opening for DJ Offer Nissim. This project was also featured in a video clip of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, created to commemorate the 15th anniversary of The Week.



"I'm honored and excited to step into the role of Music Director of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra. Greenville's welcoming community immediately drew me in when I came as a guest conductor, and the Symphony's mission-driven approach to bringing people together through the performing arts is exactly what I want to be a part of. The musicians here are incredibly talented and inspired me by their adventurousness and dynamism. I can't wait to bring our next season to life with them this fall."

Lee Julls

At the invitation of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Music Director Marin Alsop, he received the prestigious BSO-Peabody Institute Conducting Fellowship in 2011. Under the tutelage of Gustav Meier and Marin Alsop, Mills received his Graduate Performance Diploma and Artist's Diploma in Orchestral Conducting at the Peabody Institute. He was a conducting fellow at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen during the summers of 2012 and 2013, working closely with Larry Rachleff, Robert Spano and Hugh Wolff. Mr Mills graduated cum laude from Whitman College, where he studied with Robert Bode.





#### 2024-2025 SEASON AT A GLANCE

#### **CONCERT HALL SERIES**

Peace Concert Hall Saturday performances at 7:30 pm Sunday at 3:00 pm

# OPENING NIGHT: BEETHOVEN'S NINTH

October 5 & 6

#### **GRIEG'S PIANO CONCERTO**

November 23 & 24

#### TCHIVZHEL CONDUCTS TCHAIK

January 25 & 26

#### **DUKE ELLINGTON'S THE RIVER**

March 1 & 2

# JACQUELINE TSO PLAYS BRUCH'S SCOTTISH FANTASY

April 5 & 6

#### BEETHOVEN AND BRAZIL

May 10 & 11

#### **GUNTER THEATRE SERIES**

Gunter Theatre

Performance start times vary

#### PETER AND THE WOLF

November 9 at 3:00 pm November 10 at 3:00 pm

#### THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

February 15 at 7:30 pm February 16 at 3:00 pm

## MOVERS, SHAKERS, AND NOISE-MAKERS

March 22 at 3:00 pm March 23 at 3:00 pm

# BACH-INSPIRED WITH VIOLIST KATHRYN DEY

May 24 at 7:30 pm May 25 at 3:00 pm

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

#### **HOLIDAY AT PEACE**

December 6 at 7:00 pm December 7 at 1:00 & 7:00 pm December 8 at 2:00 pm

#### MUSIC IN THE GRAY LOFT

Enjoy lunch or wine while you listen featuring the principal musicians of the Greenville Symphony

## DRACULA! WITH SPECIAL GUEST DACRE STOKER

October 24 at 12:00 pm & 5:30 pm

#### MUSIC FOR A SPRING AFTERNOON

April 24 at 12:00 pm & 5:30 pm

#### HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN™

January 11 at 1:00 pm & 7:00 pm January 12 at 2:00 pm

#### MUSIC AT HOTEL HARTNESS

A luxe experience in a beautiful space featuring the principal musicians of the Greenville Symphony

## DRACULA! WITH SPECIAL GUEST DACRE STOKER

October 23 at 7:00 pm

#### MUSIC FOR A SPRING EVENING

April 23 at 7:00 pm





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