



La Crosse Symphony Orchestra

Endow the Encore

JUNE 2026

www.lacrossesymphony.org/encore

KEEP THE MUSIC PLAYING

La Crosse has always been a community that builds for the future. My family arrived here in the 1850s, and in 1897 founded a business rooted in service and stewardship. At nearly the same moment the first notes of what would become the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra began to sound. For more than a century, generations of residents have sustained this orchestra because they understood that great communities invest in enduring cultural institutions.

Time and again, visionary leadership has carried the Symphony forward. In the 1970s dedicated board members and community champions gave generously of their time and resources to strengthen the organization's foundation. Decades later, during the financial uncertainty following the housing crisis, supporters once again stepped forward. In 2012 they established an endowment to protect the Symphony for future generations, a decisive investment in stability, excellence, and growth.

That foresight reshaped what the Symphony could become. Endowment support enabled the appointment of Maestro Alexander Platt, whose leadership elevated artistic standards and draws outstanding professional musicians and soloists from across the nation and abroad. Today, the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra is recognized as a premier regional ensemble performing ambitious repertoires and reaching audiences far beyond the concert hall through statewide broadcasts.

Most importantly, the Symphony's impact extends deep into our community. Each year, thousands of students experience the transformative power of live orchestral music through our education programs. We partner with multiple school districts and Boys & Girls Clubs to ensure young people have access to meaningful musical experiences that build creativity, discipline, and confidence. Demand for these programs continues to grow, and we are preparing to serve even more students in the years ahead. Now, we stand at another defining moment.

To meet expanding educational needs, sustain artistic excellence, broaden performance programming and ensure long-term financial strength, we must grow our endowment once more. This is not simply about funding concerts. It is about securing access to inspire children, preserving a cultural cornerstone for families, and strengthening the creative vitality that makes La Crosse an exceptional place to live. An investment in the Symphony is an investment in legacy, one generation choosing to enrich the next.

We invite you to help shape this next chapter. With your support, the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra will continue to inspire audiences, educate young people, and serve as a cultural beacon for generations to come.



Eva Marie Restel

EVA MARIE RESTEL

Executive Director, La Crosse Symphony Orchestra

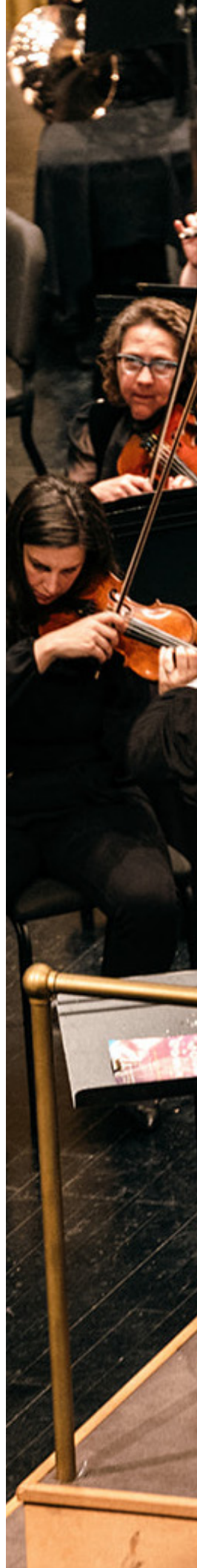


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Mission

The mission of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra (LSO) is to provide high-quality orchestral music, offer engagement opportunities to all greater La Crosse area community members, and enhance the education, diversity, and arts culture in our community.

Core Values

- 🎵 High-quality performance of orchestral music
 - 🎵 Fiscal responsibility and sustainability
 - 🎵 Commitment to organizational excellence
 - 🎵 Enhancement of education and arts culture in our community
-

Vision

- 🎵 Continually improve the quality of orchestral performance
- 🎵 Continue to strengthen recognition as a regional orchestra
- 🎵 Generate substantial financial resources
- 🎵 Increase diversity and engagement in the symphony program
- 🎵 Make performances widely available



THE MUSIC THAT MOVES US

Dear Friends,

The La Crosse Symphony Orchestra (LSO) stands out among regional orchestras. We are one of the smaller communities that sustain a professional orchestra; we bring in world-class artists to our concerts, and we provide exceptional performances. This reflects La Crosse's culture of generosity and the love for music.

As the 2026-27 Board President of the LSO, I write to you with deep gratitude for your past support. For over 125 years, our symphony has been inspiring our audience and serving the community through live music. We are committed to continue to do so for the next 125 years and beyond.

For my own family, the orchestra has been far more than concerts - it has truly shaped who we are. My children have grown up attending the LSO performances and participating in the Education Programs. These experiences have brought us closer together and nurtured a lasting love of music. Most meaningful to me is the impact it has on my son. He recently shared:

"The La Crosse Symphony Orchestra was my very first and remains one of the most important inspirations in my development as a musician. The LSO gives students like me a chance to hear world-class artists, attend live concerts, a space to showcase our craft, and even play with a professional orchestra right here at home. Most importantly, it gives us a real purpose: to serve the music to the best of our ability."

These words remind me why this work matters so deeply - not just as Board President, but as a parent.

Like many great orchestras, our symphony relies upon sponsorships, fundraising, and philanthropy to fill the gap between ticket sales and our operating budget. In addition to economic pressure and increases in expenses, we must address essential commitments: musician compensation, higher venue rental fees, and the ever-rising costs of presenting high quality performances.

These financial realities present us with a vision and an opportunity to secure our orchestra's future. After a comprehensive Campaign Readiness Study in 2025, conversations with donors, and careful planning, our Board of Directors has unanimously concluded that a \$3.5 million Capital Campaign is both necessary and achievable.

The board has led the way by making financial commitments and dedicating our time, energy, and networks to this effort. We have stepped forward first because we deeply believe in our mission: to provide high-quality orchestral music, offer engagement opportunities to all Greater La Crosse Area community members, and enhance arts education and culture in our community.

We hope you join us as we embark on this important endeavor. Your involvement would not only help us move forward with our shared goals, but it will also inspire others in our community to join us as well. We have been able to serve because of you.

Thank you very much for being with us on our journey forward.

Musically yours,



CHAU NGUYEN

Board Chair (2026-27)



To serve others, you must serve the music first

- Martin Marks, pianist



The La Crosse Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors, Conductor, Musicians, and Staff are grateful for the assistance of the many campaign volunteers who have worked diligently to advocate for this project.

**La Crosse Symphony Orchestra
Board of Directors**

- Bill Bosch, President, 2025-26
- Chau Nguyen, President-Elect
- Jessica Raymond, Treasurer
- Travis Bordeau, Secretary
- Jodi Ehrenberger, Executive Member
- Lisa Radtke, Executive Member
- Sean O’Flaherty, Past-President
- Dera Arnold
- Tom Behrenbeck
- Wayne Bottner
- Jennifer Burch
- Matt Curtis
- Adam Fleis
- Maureen Freedland
- Megan Howard

- Roz Laraway
- Claudia Newton
- Chris Palmer
- Carson Schneider
- Brandon Stratman
- Beth Wagner
- Brad Weber
- Aaron Wickesberg

Executive Director

- Eva Marie Restel

Emeritus Board Members

- Sister Mary Ann Gschwind
- Pat Heim
- Dick Record
- David Reedy
- Randy Van Rooyen

**Endow the Encore Campaign
Pre-campaign Committees**

- General Campaign Co-chairs*
- David Reedy
- Chau Nguyen
- Kelly Colgan

Case Statement Committee

- Tom Behrenbeck
- Wayne Bottner
- Jan Brock
- Jennifer Burch
- Adam Fleis
- Maureen Freedland
- Joe Heim
- Mary Beth Hensel
- Sue Horne
- Roz Laraway
- Claudia Newton



Chau Nguyen
Jane Rada
Lisa M. Radtke
Jessica Raymond
Eva Marie Restel
Carson Schneider
Beth Wagner

Leadership Committee

Bill Bosch
Chuck Hanson
Megan Howard
Chau Nguyen
David Reedy
Eva Marie Restel
Aaron Wickesberg

Communications Committee

Travis Bourdeau
Matt Curtis

Lisa Drexler
Sean Dwyer
Nancy Flottmeyer
Megan Howard
Annette Mikat
Chris Palmer
Eva Marie Restel
Michelle Skemp
Ezra Wall

Steering Committee

Terry Bauer
Bill Bosch
Kelly Colgan
Jodi Ehrenberger
Chuck Hanson
Chau Nguyen
Sean O'Flaherty
David Reedy

Eva Marie Restel
Todd Restel
Brandon Stratman
Randy Van Rooyen
Brad Weber
Aaron Wickesberg

Prospect Committee

Dera Arnold
Kelly Colgan
Sister Mary Ann Gschwind
Chuck Hanson
Bill LaRue
Dick Record
David Reedy
Eva Marie Restel
Joe Skemp
Barbara Skogen
Aaron Wickesberg

Executive Summary

SETTING THE STAGE

A symphony performance is more than a stage and a score. It is a gathering place that brings people together. In the concert hall, families sit side by side with students who are experiencing a live performance for the first time and seniors who have cherished decades of musical productions. These shared moments create memories that last long after the final note fades.

Just as the Mississippi River flows through La Crosse's history, the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra (LSO) flows through the cultural current that makes this region exceptional. With a history spanning more than 125 years, the LSO is a rare asset that deserves care and investment.

Today, the LSO stands at a moment of extraordinary possibility – one where the community's collective commitment can ensure the orchestra's legacy will resonate for generations yet to come.

A CAMPAIGN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

In early 2025, the Board of Directors determined that now was the time to grow its permanent endowment so that the LSO can serve future generations with confidence and stability. The Board engaged Crescendo Fundraising Professionals to conduct a Campaign Readiness Study for a potential endowment campaign. The study was highly favorable and demonstrated the LSO was well-positioned to move forward with a campaign goal of \$3.5 million. Of particular note, even before establishing campaign committees, \$500,000 in pledges have already been received for the campaign. Leading the campaign as co-chairs are David Reedy, Chau Nguyen, and Kelly Colgan. Their combined enthusiasm and love of the LSO is certain to lead to success.

MORE THAN MUSIC

Each season, the LSO presents six main concerts. Yet every concert is an event beyond the performance. Hundreds gather at Viterbo University before the concert to enjoy camaraderie, refreshments, and local music. A pre-concert lecture with the LSO's music director, Alexander Platt, is standing room only and enhances the experience of hearing the symphony. Afterwards, patrons gather again for refreshments and can continue the evening at an off-site post-concert party. For many, the symphony provides not only music, but also an opportunity for connection with friends and community.





6,000+
Annual Attendees



5,000+
Youth Reached
Annually



6
Regular Season
Concerts



2
Symphony for Youth
Concerts



\$825,000
Annual Operating
Budget



\$1.7 Million
Endowment



127 Years
of History



50 - 70
Contract Musicians



12
String Scholarships



\$33 Million
Economic Impact of Arts
& Cultural Organizations
in La Crosse*

**The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of La Crosse WI, (Fiscal Year 2015), Arts & Economic Prosperity®5 A Project for the Arts*



A central part of the LSO’s mission is providing musical experiences for all ages, especially young people. Through its partnerships, the LSO reaches over 5,000 children each year. This includes:

- 🎵 **Symphony for Youth Concert**, which welcomes third- through fifth-grade students to experience classical music in a professional concert setting.
- 🎵 **Play It Forward**, which distributes used instruments to students in schools around the region, plus two Boys and Girls Clubs, that want to participate in school band or orchestra, but whose families cannot afford to buy or rent.
- 🎵 **Free Violin Lessons**, which provide students at two Boys and Girls Club locations the opportunity to learn to play, while building meaningful mentoring relationships.
- 🎵 **LSO’s String Scholarships** further reduce barriers so every child can discover, learn, and be inspired by music.

MUSICIANS CARRY THE TUNE

The LSO’s strength begins with its extraordinary music director, Maestro Alexander Platt, and the 70 musicians who shape its sound. Attracting and retaining top talent is critical to the experience. The LSO is fortunate that musicians choose to play here because of the positive culture within the orchestra. However, after reviewing musician compensation data, the LSO found its musicians were paid significantly below industry standards. To remain competitive, the organization implemented an 18% increase in musician pay for the 2024–25 and 2025–26 seasons. While this brings wages closer to those of comparable regional orchestras, the LSO strives for the 50th percentile of regional pay.

Although many musicians call this region home, others live outside of Greater La Crosse. Rising travel and lodging costs, combined with increased facility rental expenses, have placed burdens on the LSO’s operating budget. Facility rental rates are expected to rise 84% over three years, an increase that underscores the need for a more resilient financial base.

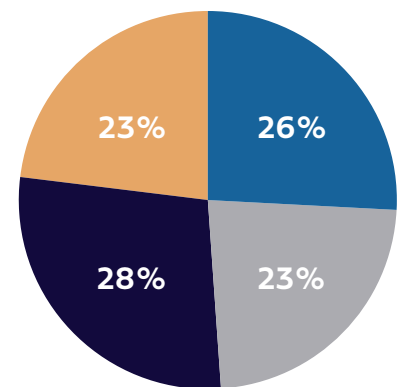
ENDOW THE ENCORE

A Campaign for Continuity

The LSO operates an annual budget of \$825,000 and maintains an endowment of \$1.7 million. Ticket sales cover 30% of concert costs, slightly below the national average of 35%. The remaining 70% comes from sponsorships, compared to the 65% national average. Rising costs and the unpredictable nature of funding make this balance increasingly difficult to maintain. Raising ticket prices is not a viable option given the audience demographics and the LSO’s commitment to keeping performances accessible.

Use of Additional Endowment Fund Distributions

- Artists
- Programming
- Education
- Enhancements





Shortly after my family moved to the area about ten years ago, I had the opportunity to sub with the LSO; it was such a delight. I feel very fortunate to be able to make music with fantastic colleagues, under Alexander's tremendous leadership – and also to be a part of the LSO's engagement and connection with our community that goes beyond the thrilling performances.

- Michelle Lee Elliott



Income Statement

La Crosse Symphony FY2025 Actual and FY 2026 Budget

Revenue	FY 2025 Actual	% of Total Revenue	FY 2026 Budget	% of Total Revenue
Sponsorships **	\$265,245	31.90%	\$263,300	31.10%
Admission Tickets **	\$215,849	26.00%	\$226,621	26.80%
(Season Ticket to Single Ticket Mix)	(57% / 43%)		(58% / 42%)	
Donations - Restricted	\$90,679	10.90%	\$96,190	11.40%
Fundraising Events	\$89,405	10.70%	\$92,955	11.00%
Conductor Wannabe Contest	\$73,704	8.90%	\$60,000	7.10%
Donations - Unrestricted	\$71,754	8.60%	\$55,000	6.50%
Grants and Foundations	\$19,250	2.30%	\$32,580	3.80%
Other / Miscellaneous	\$5,899	0.70%	\$20,000	2.40%
Total Revenue	\$831,785	100.00%	\$846,646	100.00%

** Program Revenue



Expenses

	FY 2025 Actual	% of Total Revenue	FY 2026 Budget	% of Total Revenue
Musician Expense ^^	\$330,485	35.00%	\$336,615	37.60%
Payroll	\$192,953	20.40%	\$200,508	22.40%
Concert Expense ^^	\$94,779	10.00%	\$83,866	9.40%
Advertising & Marketing ^^	\$76,910	8.20%	\$35,000	3.90%
Education & Youth ^^	\$59,906	6.30%	\$72,250	8.10%
Accounting and Audit	\$38,704	4.10%	\$37,000	4.10%
Fundraising Expense	\$37,808	4.00%	\$40,187	4.50%
Donations to Community Not-For-Profits	\$36,852	3.90%	\$30,000	3.30%
Bank and Credit Card Fees	\$31,417	3.30%	\$15,000	1.70%
Office Supplies	\$15,870	1.70%	\$12,500	1.40%
Other / Miscellaneous	\$7,419	0.80%	\$7,700	0.90%
Insurance	\$6,293	0.70%	\$6,000	0.70%
Dues & Membership	\$5,626	0.60%	\$7,600	0.80%
Licenses & Fees	\$4,789	0.50%	\$5,000	0.60%
Music Licenses (ASCAP & BMI)	\$2,162	0.50%	\$4,500	0.50%
Postage	\$1,569	0.20%	\$2,000	0.20%

Total Expenses	943,542	100.00%	895,726	100.00%
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^^ Program Expenses

Net Operating Income	-\$111,757		-\$49,080	
Other Income*	\$174,522		\$59,020	
Net Income	\$62,765		\$9,940	

*Other Income includes in-kind, endowment draw, interest, realized and unrealized gain/loss



There is something unique about the collaborative and collegial environment musicians feel within the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra that stands apart from other orchestras. While many members play in a variety of other ensembles, performing with the LSO feels like coming home. We look forward to our time together and bringing extraordinary musical experiences to our community.

- Mary Beth Hensel
Principal Oboe





The First Movement

The LSO made its debut in 1898 under the direction of Marcellus Greenwood. It is one of the Midwest's oldest orchestras, predating the Madison Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. The orchestra's initial formation had the support of the city's three newspapers. After one of its first concerts, the *La Crosse Morning Chronicle* proclaimed that the LSO was "one of the best and most meritorious musical undertakings La Crosse has ever known."

A COMMUNITY'S COMMITMENT TO ITS ORCHESTRA

Since the beginning, sustaining the orchestra has required shared commitment and community investment to keep the music playing. During its first year, La Crosse business leaders and musicians established a \$300 fund to purchase musical instruments. The LSO blossomed, folded, and reorganized seven more times, emerging after World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. There were many times the orchestra lacked financial support in the community, but individuals like Leigh Toland, John Colmean and Leigh Elder guided the LSO and kept the orchestra in the community spotlight. In 1916, the *La Crosse Tribune* wrote, "La Crosse needs this orchestra. Why should not everybody, musical or not, rally around its director and officers?"

The LSO was not alone in navigating financial pressures of the time; many orchestras across the country were struggling as well. In those years the organizations that secured consistent, reliable funding were the ones that persisted. During the late 1980s and early 1990s the LSO again faced a period of financial strain, yet its leadership responded with discipline and resolve by conducting a careful financial review, adopting a sustainable budget, and launching a successful fund drive that generated \$50,000 for operations. Through perseverance, thoughtful leadership, and the support of the community, the LSO has continued to thrive, sustaining a musical tradition that has endured for 128 years.

After the financial downturn in 2008, it became increasingly clear that the LSO needed to shore up its financial foundation. In 2012 then-president of the Board of Directors, David Reedy, announced the launch of an endowment campaign, stating that a strong endowment was a necessity, not a luxury. In a short period of time, the campaign raised \$1.25 million to support operations and establish a permanent endowment.

Through its various iterations, a consistent theme runs through the LSO: audiences respond to the level of musicianship that only professional musicians can deliver. Yet traditional funding models have proven that a professional orchestra, regardless of its location or size of its budget, cannot rely on ticket revenues alone to remain viable.

The La Crosse area is unusually blessed by the extraordinary talent of the LSO's music director, Maestro Alexander Platt.

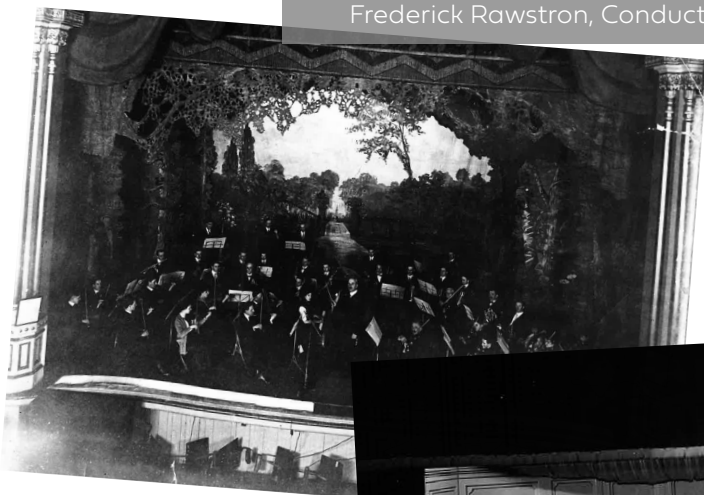
A highly regarded conductor among patrons, musicians, and colleagues, Platt comes to La Crosse having built a unique career spanning the worlds of symphony, chamber music and opera as conductor, music director, curator and host. A graduate of Yale College and King's College, Cambridge, where he studied as a British Marshall Scholar, Platt also completed conducting fellowships at both Aspen and Tanglewood.

Platt has served as the Music Director of the La Crosse Symphony since 2010. Based in Chicago and New York, he has appeared as a guest conductor with orchestras throughout the United States and world.

Platt's leadership attracts not only a loyal audience but musicians as well. Musicians purposefully choose to perform under Platt strengthening the LSO's ability to attract and retain some of the best musicians in the Midwest.



La Crosse Symphony Orchestra 1914
Frederick Rawstron, Conductor



La Crosse Symphony Orchestra
1948 Leigh Elder, Conductor





I love serving a beautiful community here in the Driftless Region – beautiful, inside and out – that really loves its Orchestra! Every day spent in La Crosse is a pleasure, whether I'm conducting or not.

La Crosse Symphony Orchestra has the potential to join the ranks of regional orchestras in the Upper Midwest in the tradition of the Duluth Symphony, the Quad Cities Symphony, Orchestra Iowa, and others. It would be a great accomplishment to offer the public a professional symphonic experience once a month throughout the winter season, thus fulfilling our role in making La Crosse an attractive place to live, work, and retire.

Classical music is the zenith of artistic expression and the lodestar of our humanity: the encapsulation of society's noblest hopes and dreams, the most elevated vessel for our storytelling. Along with our schools, churches, sports teams, hospitals, and universities, it is the "glue" that holds our communities together, and in that regard, there is nothing that can bring a community together like the thrill of a great orchestra performance.

Quite simply, having the resources from which to hire professional musicians allows all of these dreams to take flight. You just can't achieve a level of greatness without paying professional musicians a competitive wage; otherwise, it's like trying to land airplanes without a runway.

This endowment campaign is absolutely vital to making the above vision a reality.

– Alexander Platt, Music Director,
La Crosse Symphony Orchestra

THE NEED

Strengthening the LSO for Generations to Come

The League of American Orchestras partners with TRG Arts, a consulting firm specializing in arts and cultural organizations, to collect and analyze patron data from orchestras across the country. The “Arts & Culture Benchmark” report demonstrates overall positive trends in audience ticket purchases and increased ticket revenues. However, ticket prices have never covered the cost of the production. According to the data for FY23, the average performance revenue per attendee was only \$32.

That means for every attendee, an orchestra must find approximately \$150 in contributions and sponsorships or draw from its endowment to cover the actual cost of the performance. The LSO faces this same reality, with ticket revenues consistent with its peer organizations. This heavy reliance on sponsorships and contributed dollars puts the LSO in a precarious position should it lose a large sponsor or grant.



My students were fortunate to attend this year's Symphony for Youth. I loved watching my students' faces light up as they recognized pieces performed and made connections to the instruments and sounds we have studied in class. Bravo to LSO S4Y for creating a program that excites young minds and makes going to the symphony accessible to so many.

- Mandy Parmeter, K-5 Hamilton/SOTA 1 Music Teacher

SOURCE OF REVENUE COMPARISON (2022-23)

Symphony	Revenue	Ticket Sales	Contributions and Sponsorships
La Crosse Symphony Orchestra	\$635,669	30%	67%
Minnesota Orchestra	\$45,012,946	20%	78%
Madison Symphony Orchestra	\$6,040,000	34.8%	64.3%
Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra	\$687,000	35.5%	65.2%

The true cost per listener to produce a live, professional symphony orchestra performance often significantly exceeds the ticket price. The cost of an individual concert is not just the cost of musicians; it includes time and rental space for rehearsals, purchasing music rights and sheet music, guest artists, performance hall rental, and more. In 1971, according to a report by the American Symphony Orchestra League, the cost per listener was \$26.17. Although this industry-wide average is no longer reported as “cost per audience member,” current financial data from major orchestras and the League of American Orchestras estimate the cost in 2025 to be between \$180 to \$220 per audience member (this will vary significantly based upon the operating budget of the organization).

Increased Ticket Prices Is Not the Answer

While most business models would suggest that the LSO increase its ticket price, this is simply not feasible. The LSO would need to charge approximately \$145 for a ticket to cover its full cost per listener. Although it is not unusual to pay that much or more for a sporting event or pop concert, data indicate orchestra patrons are not amenable to higher prices. In fact, some professional orchestras that have reduced ticket prices have experienced increased attendance as a result.

The good news is the audience demographic is shifting. A 2022 study by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra found that people under age 35 are actually more likely to listen to classical music than their parents. According to the report, more than half of today’s classical audiences are newcomers, while fewer than one-third identify as longtime patrons. While it is encouraging to see new patrons, orchestras must overcome the hurdle that young audiences perceive performances as overly formal and inaccessible. Therefore, orchestras must adapt to this new audience while continuing to satisfy its long-term patrons. The LSO has observed this dynamic as new patrons freely express their pleasure with applause in between movements, while long-time patrons feel this disrupts the flow of the performance.

One way the LSO has adapted to evolving audiences is through online programming on its YouTube channel. With the success of the capital campaign, the LSO aspires to broaden its YouTube offerings. Trends show both long-time and new patrons gravitating to streaming services as they seek flexibility in when, where, and how they enjoy an orchestra performance.

With a stronger operating endowment, the LSO will have the ability to adapt to its audience demands by adding performances to its live concerts, such as chamber music and increasing its online offerings.

The Second Movement



BEYOND THE CONCERT – YOUTH EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMING

The LSO is proud to offer an array of educational programs and opportunities to area youth through its Educational Programs. These initiatives are designed to foster a lifelong love and appreciation for music by exposing children and young adults to the magic of orchestral music and live performance.

Symphony for Youth


Every year more than 1,000 third- through fifth-grade students from across the area have the opportunity to attend the Symphony for Youth (S4Y) concert. They get to experience a professional performance of a musical masterpiece. The performance lasts approximately 45 minutes and includes an educational element. Students are taught performance and theatre etiquette and are encouraged to applaud and even stand up if they liked what they heard and saw. They are also taught

that it is okay if they did not care for it, but not to say anything unkind when leaving.

The cost to deliver two S4Y concerts during the 2025-26 season was \$29,000. Moving forward, the LSO hopes to give even more children the opportunity to experience a live orchestral performance. By adding \$300,000 to the current endowment, the LSO would be able to add a third S4Y concert and introduce an additional 1,000 youth to the orchestra. A \$1 million permanent endowment would fund the three concerts in virtual perpetuity.

Youth Violin Lessons

In 2022 the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra was honored as the Volunteer Program of the Year by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse Mission Awards. In its 11th year, the LSO has partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs and the School District



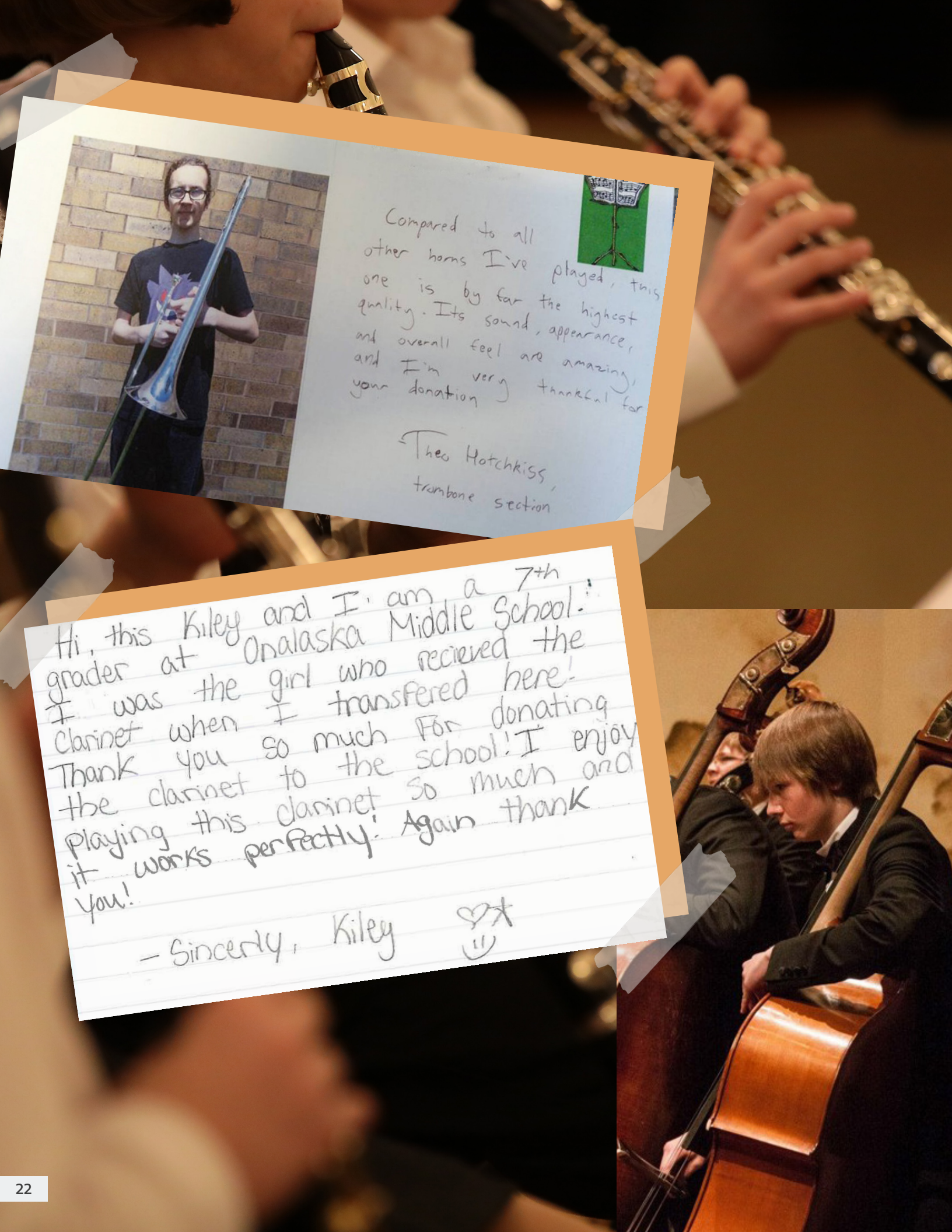
of La Crosse to provide free after-school violin lessons at three Club locations: the Terry Erickson and Amie L. Mathy Clubs in La Crosse, and the Don & Cheryl Brenengen Club in West Salem. The LSO's professional musicians teach the lessons, and students from the Tri-M Music Honor Society volunteer their time to support practice sessions on non-lesson days. Access to professional musicians is uncommon even in large metropolitan areas – yet this program brings that rare opportunity directly to young people in the surrounding rural region.

Studies show that music instruction improves academic performance, strengthens social and behavioral skills, and provides lifelong benefits. Students perform recitals for family and peers and will be prepared for live auditions that build confidence in front of live audiences.


Beyond hands-on learning, participants receive free tickets to the LSO's October, November, and March concerts. They and their families may also purchase tickets to the December, April, and May concerts at the student rate, regardless of age. The cost to deliver this life-changing program is just \$10,000 per year. An additional \$60,000 would allow the LSO to expand to a fourth site. A \$250,000 permanent endowment would secure the program's future for generations of young musicians.

Play It Forward

An extraordinary program, Play it Forward, provides the violins for Boys & Girls Club participants. This removes a substantial barrier to students who would otherwise be unable to afford to purchase or rent a violin. But the impact of Play It Forward extends beyond Boys & Girls Club participants.

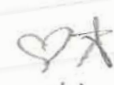



Compared to all other horns I've played, this one is by far the highest quality. Its sound, appearance, and overall feel are amazing, and I'm very thankful for your donation



Theo Hotchkiss,
trumpet section

Hi, this is Kiley and I, am a 7th grader at Onalaska Middle School. I was the girl who recieved the Clarinet when I transfered here! Thank you so much for donating the clarinet to the school! I enjoy playing this clarinet so much and it works perfectly! Again thank you!

- Sincerely, Kiley 




INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

Play It Forward

Not all children are enrolled at a Boys & Girls Club, and not all are interested in learning violin. However, many students are eager to participate in their school music programs but lack the financial means to purchase or rent an instrument. In other cases, schools do not have enough instruments available for every interested student. Play It Forward helps bridge this gap by providing a variety of instruments to students who might otherwise miss the opportunity to participate in music.

The LSO and its partner, Leithold Music, accept donations of gently used, playable instruments which are then loaned to students in the La Crosse School District.

The opportunity to impact youth does not stop there. Because not everyone has a used instrument they would like to donate, Leithold Music maintains a list of needed instruments for the schools in the district and has gently used instruments that can be purchased for the school of their choice.

People can also donate to a maintenance fund that allows for the upkeep of the instruments, extending their playable life. The 2025-26 budget for Play It Forward is \$5,000. An endowment of \$100,000 would sustain the program over time.

Scholarships & Financial Support For Youth

In addition to the youth education and outreach programs outlined, the LSO offers a string scholarship to children in grades three through 11 enrolled in a public or private school, or homeschooled, within the greater La Crosse geographic region. Scholarship recipients receive financial support for private lessons with an LSO or local professional musician, 50% off tuition upon acceptance into a La Crosse Youth Symphony Orchestra performing group, and two complimentary full-season tickets to the LSO concerts. Currently, students cannot receive a scholarship in consecutive years. The annual budget for string scholarships is \$5,250. Establishing a more robust endowment of at least \$100,000

would allow the LSO to expand the program's reach, support additional students each year, and potentially offer scholarships to deserving young musicians in consecutive years.

Emplify Health Fellowship Program

The LSO is also fortunate to have the Emplify Health Fellowship Program that brings promising violinists and violists who are 38-years or younger and pursuing an orchestral career to La Crosse. Fellows work with local middle school programs, perform for the Emplify Music Healing program, and are actively involved in the Boys & Girls Club free violin lessons. They also attend and interact with patrons at the Guest Artist Society events and post-concert coffee and treats. This mutually beneficial arrangement provides Fellows the opportunity to gain valuable mentorship experience, audition preparation, and community engagement training, while youth and patrons are exposed to talented emerging musicians.

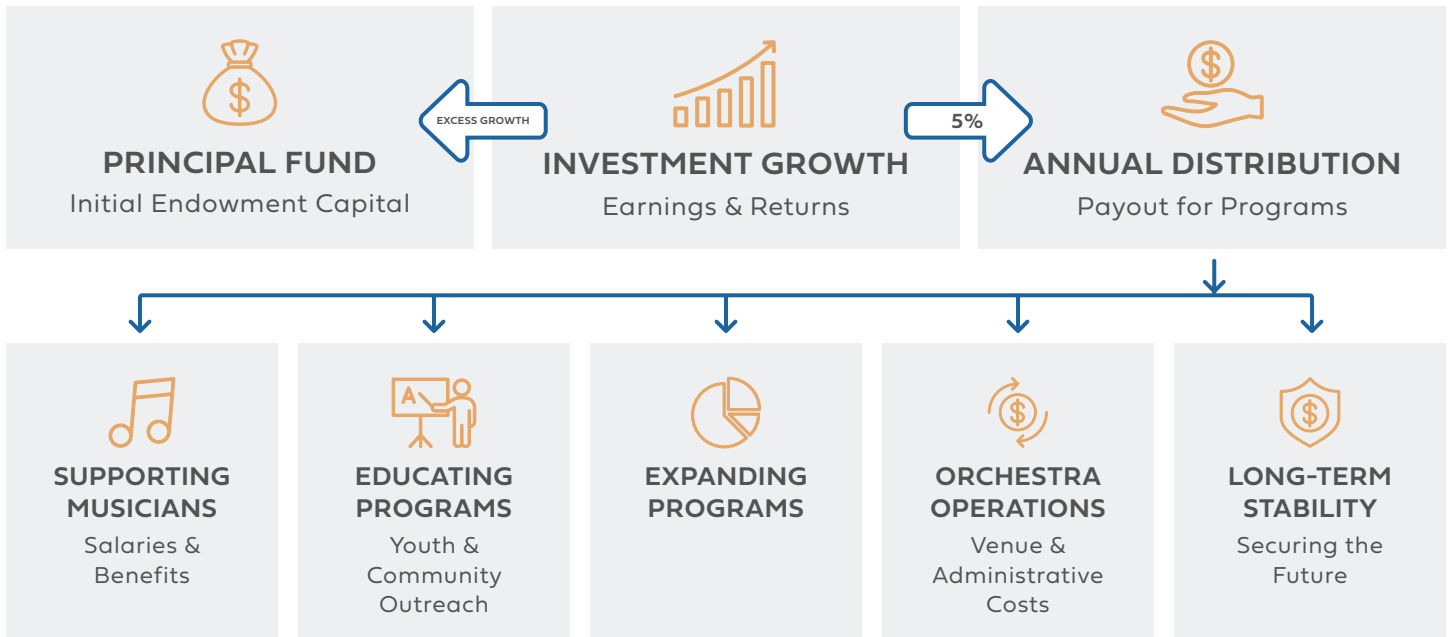
Richard Record Rising Stars Concerto Competition

Another powerful way the LSO enriches youth music education beyond the concert hall is through the Richard Record Rising Stars Concerto Competition. In the digital age and with the rise in technology, online video auditions have become the norm. While convenient, they often exacerbate inequities among pre-college students. Many families struggle to afford proper performance attire, quality recording equipment, or access to good instruments and suitable spaces for filming – let alone the resources needed to produce a polished, professional audition video.

In contrast, the Rising Stars competition stands out as one of the few remaining in-person events in the tri-state area. It creates a true even playing field whereby every student is judged on their live performance, not on production value. Here, young musicians learn the invaluable art of performing live: rigorous preparation, managing stage nerves, connecting with an audience, and giving their very best to the music. These experiences build confidence, resilience, and a deeper development of what it means to serve the art form.



The Third Movement



UNDERSTANDING HOW AN ENDOWMENT WORKS

Endowment funds are unique to the nonprofit world, which is why many people are unfamiliar with the term, much less with how they work. In simple terms, an endowment fund is set up to provide a source of income for a specific charitable purpose. Contributions to an endowment make up what is called the “principal.” The principal and any additions to the principal are never spent by the nonprofit. Instead, the funds are invested to generate growth and income. Using the nonprofit’s spending policy, the endowment makes annual distributions from the fund’s proceeds, which then can be used for its operations and offerings. Any earnings in excess of the organization’s spending policy are reinvested in the endowment, allowing it to grow and help protect it against market fluctuations and inflation.

Trust Point, a local wealth management firm that has operated in La Crosse since 1913, has administered the LSO’s endowment since 2012 when the LSO, under the volunteer leadership of David Reedy, launched its first capital campaign to establish an endowment. The “Beyond 115 Years: A Legacy of Symphonic Music” campaign raised \$1.25 million and has served the operational needs of the LSO ever since.

Guided by an investment policy, Trust Point has managed the endowment for both growth and income. Since 2013 the endowment has generated \$885,000



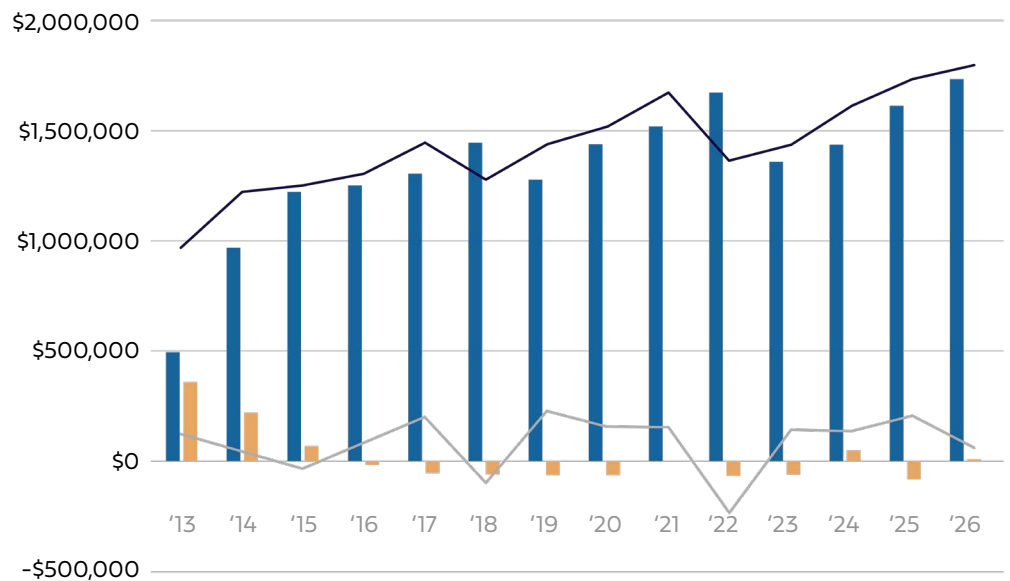
in gains with an average 6.8% annual return. Today, the endowment is valued at \$1.7 million. Using a prudent spending policy of 5% (nationally, orchestras' average endowment draw in FY23 was 4.8%), the endowment provides the LSO with \$70,000 annually. The 5% is calculated based on the endowment balance on June 30 of the current and prior two years. This creates a "smoothing" effect as the market rises and falls. Earnings in excess of the 5% are invested back into the endowment, providing additional growth as a hedge against inflation.

ENDOW THE ENCORE CAMPAIGN DETAILS

Chau Nguyen, Kelly Colgan, and David Reedy, co-chairs of the Endow the Encore Campaign, are excited to lead this effort to raise \$3.5M for the LSO's permanent endowment. They and a full cadre of dedicated volunteers will begin the quiet solicitation stage in summer 2026 before publicly launching the campaign on September 10 at the Capella Wedding & Events Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

ENDOWMENT PERFORMANCE OVER TIME

- Beginning Value
- Net Contributions & Withdrawals
- Investment Gain or Loss
- Ending Value



We have been involved in many communities through our business and we have noticed that La Crosse is unique in having a symphony like ours attracting people from a wide radius. We feel it is important to support the organizations that will continually add to the health and vibrancy of our community.

- David and Barb Skogen

The Fourth Movement

HOW TO SUPPORT ENDOW THE ENCORE

There is no time like the present to ensure the long-term future of the LSO by making an outright gift or pledge to its endowment. Pledges can be fulfilled over three to five years using a payment method that suits your personal financial situation. The LSO will send out pledge reminders based on your requested payment schedule.

Ways To Give

The LSO provides a variety of ways to make your gift and/or fulfill your pledge.

- Cash
- Check
- Credit card gifts can be made through lacrossesympphony.org/encore/how-to-give and may be set up as recurring donations on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis.
- Stock or Mutual Funds
- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from an IRA
- Donor Advised Fund (Note: there are restrictions regarding using a DAF to pay a personal pledge. However, you can make a recurring grant request. Please ask your fund administrator for specific instructions.)
- Other options, such as gifting real property, cryptocurrency, and life insurance, are available. Please contact Eva Marie Restel for specific instructions.

Donor Recognition Plan and Naming Opportunities

All contributions of \$1,000 or more to the Endow the Encore will be recognized on the website and in concert programs. All gifts of \$500 or more will be publicly acknowledged during the campaign without disclosing the amount (all gift and pledge amounts are kept confidential unless requested by the donor). Gifts may be made in honor or in memory of someone or in recognition of a specific event or accomplishment. A donor may also choose to remain anonymous.

The following giving societies were established by the LSO to recognize gifts and pledges to the LSO's endowment. Donors who have contributed previously to the endowment and make additional gifts during the Endow the Encore Campaign will be recognized in the category based upon their cumulative giving. Donors will have the opportunity to identify how they wish their names to be listed in publications or permanent displays.





Giving Societies

Gift Amount

Overture Circle	\$500,000 and greater
Leadership Circle	\$250,000 to \$499,999
Conductor Circle	\$100,000 to \$249,999
Principal Circle	\$25,000 to \$99,999
Artist Circle	\$10,000 to \$24,999
Patron Circle	\$5,000 to \$9,999
Friends	\$1,000 to \$4,999
Stakeholders	Up to \$999

Donors who make a gift of \$100,000 may choose to have their name alongside a specific endowment fund.

Named Endowment Opportunities

Gift Amount

Education Programs	\$1,000,000
Symphony for Youth	\$750,000
Executive Director	\$500,000
Maestro	\$500,000
Music Library	\$200,000
Concertmaster	\$175,000
Associate Concertmaster	\$125,000
Assistant Concertmaster	\$125,000
Principal 2nd Violin	\$100,000
Principal Viola	\$100,000
Principal Cello	\$100,000
Principal Bass	\$100,000
Principal Flute	\$100,000
Principal Oboe	\$100,000
Principal Clarinet	\$100,000
Principal Bassoon	\$100,000
Principal French Horn	\$100,000
Principal Trumpet	\$100,000
Principal Trombone	\$100,000
Principal Percussion/Timpani	\$100,000
String Scholarship	\$100,000
Play It Forward	\$100,000



Music has always been an integral part of our family's life, and we make a point each year of enjoying the magic that is the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra. . . We encourage all who have felt the magic of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra to join us in supporting them and their legacy for generations to come!

- Jeff and Patti Lokken

When you are asked to give,
please give generously!

CONNECT WITH THE LSO:

Eva Marie Restel

608.783.2121

exec@lacrossesymphony.org

lacrossesymphony.org/encore

Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC

Ellen Hongerholt, M.A., Founder/President

Jillian Harris, M.A., Consultant

Mikayla Larsen, Graphic Designer

Nancy M. Brown, M.A., CFRE, Consultant

Nicole Hall, Consultant

Ashley Ludwig, Editor

Kevin Hennessy, Editor

