The William Penn Foundation Has Awarded $2.2 Million in Grants to The Philadelphia Orchestra

Grants Support Philadelphia Orchestra’s Commitment to Communities

(Philadelphia, October 26, 2016)—The Philadelphia Orchestra has just received two grants totaling $2.2 million from the William Penn Foundation to be awarded over the next two seasons. Both support key aspects of The Orchestra’s HEAR initiative, a portfolio of Collaborative Learning programs that promotes Health, champions music Education, eliminates barriers to Accessing the Orchestra, and maximizes impact through Research.

“We are watching The Philadelphia Orchestra evolve with keen excitement,” said Shawn McCaney, director of creative communities and national initiatives at the William Penn Foundation. “From season to season it has embraced new ideas and introduced exciting projects that impact our communities in meaningful and engaging ways, and we are pleased to support this important work.”

The $1.6 million grant supports a far-reaching example of The Philadelphia Orchestra’s commitment to connecting with a broader range of patrons from throughout the area. The venture will take the Orchestra to underserved neighborhoods, sharing the joyous experience of live performance with many who may be hearing the Orchestra for the first time. The program will also provide new avenues for engaging that highly sought-after demographic, millennials.

“For the last several years, The Philadelphia Orchestra has committed itself to devising innovative and interactive platforms to present the vitality of the Orchestra’s art form and civic resource in an ever-changing world,” said Allison Vulgamore, Philadelphia Orchestra president and CEO. “We are grateful beyond words that the William Penn Foundation has provided heartwarming affirmation of our success. The Foundation’s recognition of the importance of engaging new audiences in new places is invaluable.”

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This significant funding will help further development of the Orchestra’s LiveNote™ concert app, leveraging the increasing options offered by ever-evolving innovations of the new technologies landscape, further underscoring The Philadelphia Orchestra’s reputation for riding the crest of communication waves, whether with recording, film, broadcast, or internet.

An additional grant of $600,000 will be spread over two seasons, allowing for the educational initiatives of The Philadelphia Orchestra to evolve to better align with local public schools. This includes underpinning the Orchestra’s involvement with the School District of Philadelphia’s All-City Orchestra, for which it recently became lead artistic partner. The Orchestra will now provide a Fellowship program for its top students. Further, the grant supports the current School Partnership Program (SPP) and its shift into a more intensive, ensemble-based School Immersion (SI) model for music instruction in underserved neighborhoods of North and West Philadelphia. It also supports the project in partnership with the Eastman Music Company, which, for every La Scala instrument purchased in Philadelphia, places an instrument in the hands of a Philadelphia student in need.

Finally, if an orchestra is to perform in previously unexplored neighborhoods, it needs a venue. A portion of the grant will not only support the concerts, but will make possible the design development planning for a mobile, customizable stage. In future seasons this will allow the Orchestra to extend its presence throughout Philadelphia.

About The Philadelphia Orchestra

CONTACT:
Patricia O’Kelly
Phone: (202) 999-9806
Email: pokelly@philorch.org

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