



**VERMONT  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**



Good morning and thank you for providing me with the opportunity to report on *your* Vermont Symphony Orchestra, celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during 2014/2015.

Just last week, the VSO held its annual Farmers' Night concert in the legislative chambers one floor down. For those of you in attendance, my remarks here will pall in contrast with the message provided through the live music. That audience experienced excitement, joy, sentimentality, passion, sadness, wonder, and peacefulness—perhaps, all at the same time! One of the remarkable things about music is how it can affect different people in different ways.

You also would have witnessed a world premiere: 12-year old Ethan Duncan from Williston had his piece, “A Year in Vermont,” performed for the very first time by the VSO with Jaime Laredo conducting. Ethan’s mother, Carol Weston, sent me an e-mail the next morning: “We were thrilled to be asked by Sandi from Music Comp. Ethan worked hard with his mentor, Erik Nielson, over the course of the past few months and he was happy with the result. I do not think however, that he was prepared for the magnificent performance by Jaime and the orchestra. What a wonderful performance!! Ethan’s life was forever changed on Wednesday night. Thank you so much and keep making wonderful music for Vermonters.”

In my pre-concert remarks last week, I suggested that Vermonters get pretty good bang for their buck through the annual appropriation. Consider this: last season, the Vermont Symphony presented 360 performances and educational events—322 of which were offered free of charge to their audiences—reaching nearly 57,000 people.



Courtesy: Jeb Wallace-Brodeur, Times Argus

Our *SymphonyKids* educational outreach programs accounted for 272 presentations, performed for 30,861 students from 201 schools in 165 communities. That equates to nearly 55% of all elementary and middle school students in Vermont. Compare that to other American orchestras of similar budget size: the average total number of performances for orchestras with budgets from \$1.7 to \$2.9 million dollars was 86.

### Vermont Symphony Orchestra, 2013-2014 Season

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Orchestral Presentations	32	17,570
Ensemble Presentations	56	8,231
<i>SymphonyKids</i> Presentations	<u>272</u>	<u>30,861</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>56,662</b>
Orchestra Average, \$1.7-2.9M *	86	

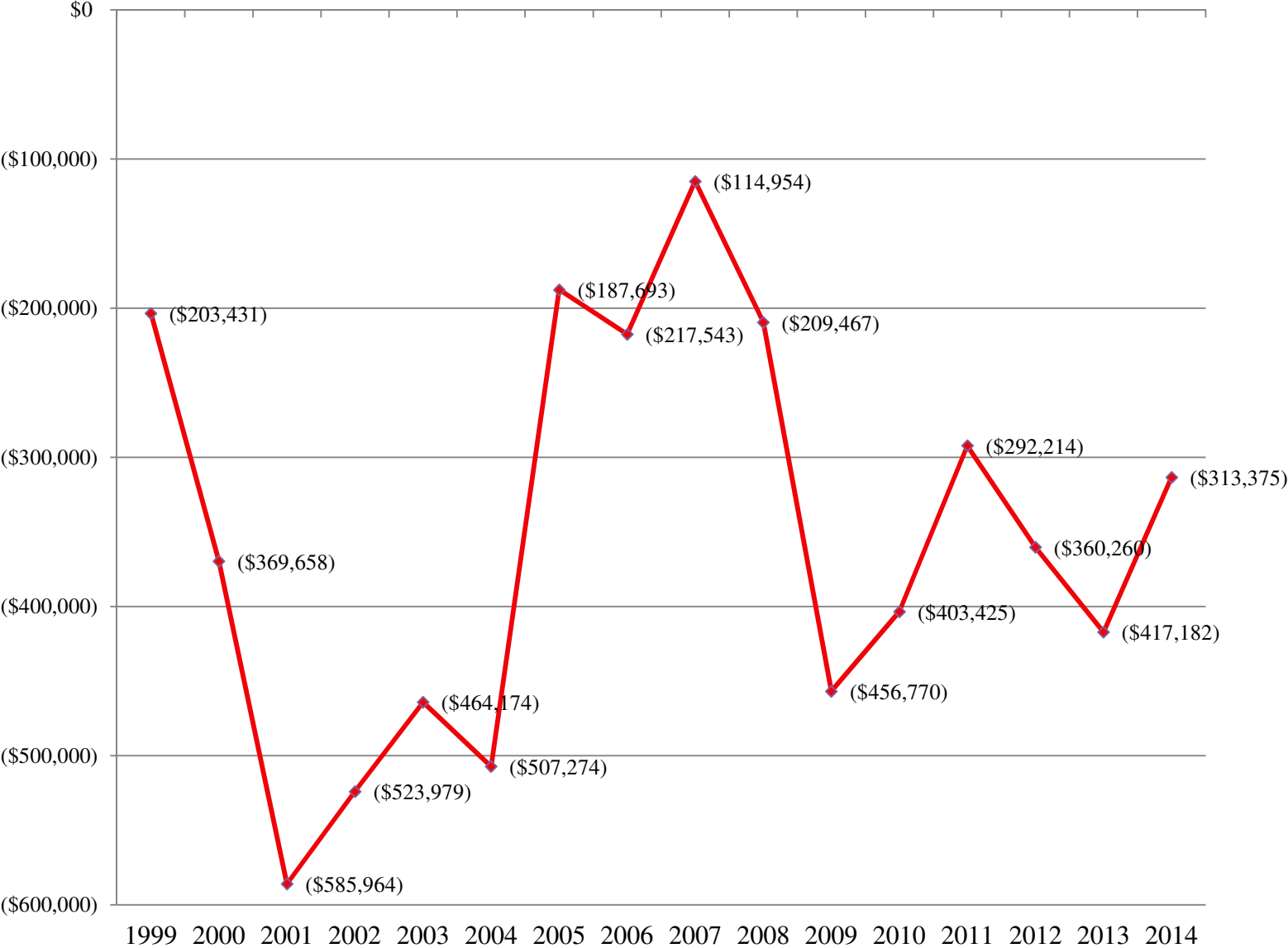
\* - League of American Orchestras Orchestra Statistical Report, FY12

Our 2014 fiscal year independent auditor's report was just adopted last week, so the numbers have not yet been posted to our website. The report sends mixed messages: on the one hand, we reduced our accumulated operating deficit by nearly \$104,000, to an August 31, 2014 balance of \$313,375. This was mainly accomplished through reclassifying net assets between unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted categories. The bad news is that expenses from operating activities surpassed revenues from operating activities by \$59,000. The Orchestra was without dedicated development staff for two years, so we definitely lost ground in our private support efforts. We now are fully staffed and anticipate these new human resources—and a committed volunteer board with support from our statewide network—should be able to re-build our development capacity. These are uncertain economic times, though, and we have our work cut out.

Please remember that our accumulated operating deficit does not directly translate to external debt. Indeed, our debt is limited to a commercial line of credit used to accommodate our annual cash cycle ebb and flow. One goal of our organization is to build a 5% surplus into each operating budget, to gradually bring down and eventually eliminate our deficit. At the same time, we plan to remove our need for an outside line of credit and build a cash reserve fund.

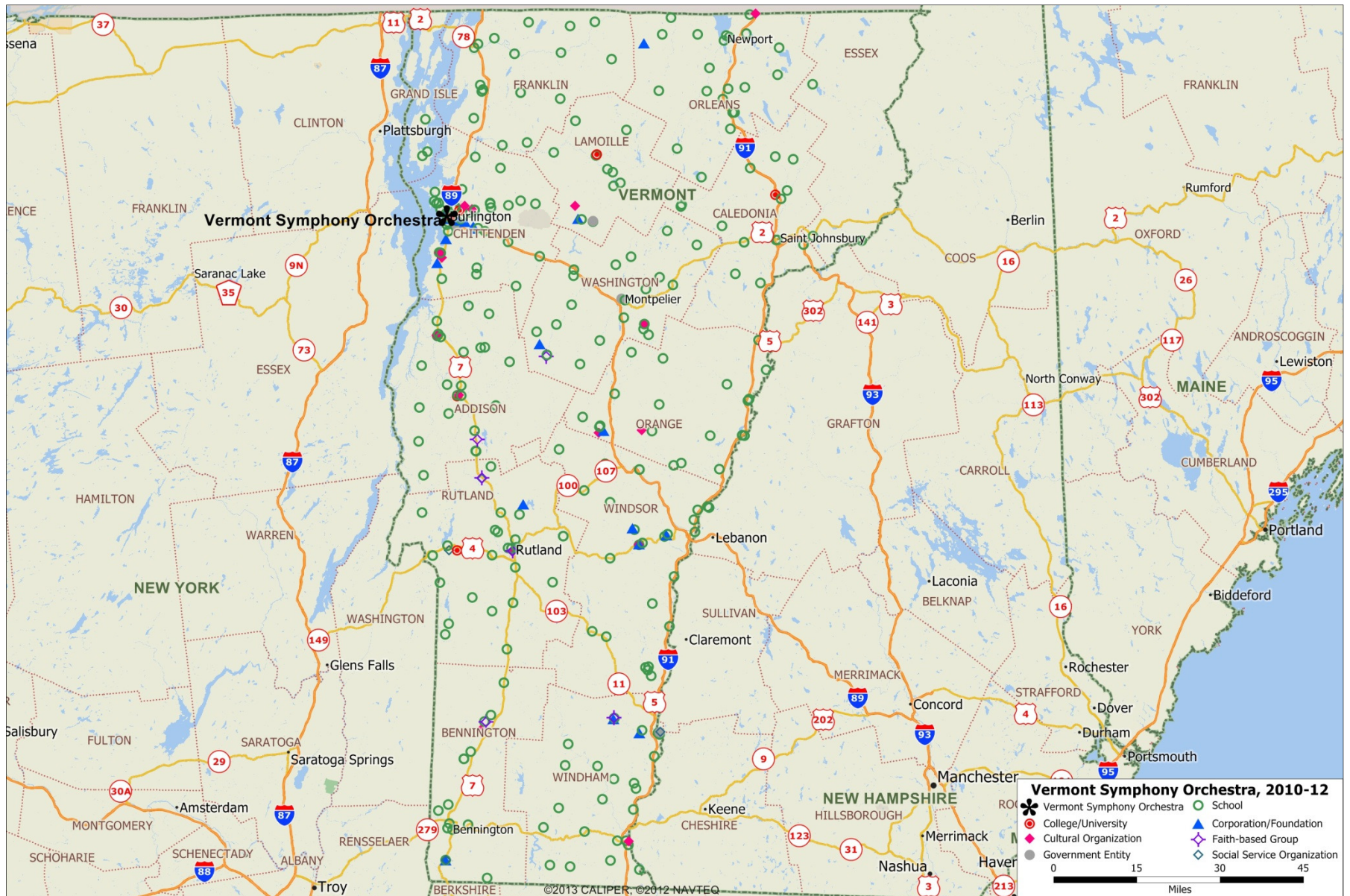
# Vermont Symphony Orchestra Accumulated Operating Deficit, FY99-14

Accumulated Deficit



As the VSO deliberated on its strategic plan, and continues to hold discussions on its implementation, the word, “ubiquitous” continues to be bandied about. It is a goal we aspire to, but wonder whether it is ever fully achievable—or should be! The next chart was provided by our national service organization last year and reflects our 300 community partners during the 2010-2012 period. One could argue some level of “ubiquity” here. These partners includes schools, other non-profits, social service and religious organizations, and businesses that work with the VSO to present great music in their communities.

**Vermont Symphony Orchestra Community Partners:** The VSO partners with more than 300 schools, colleges and universities, cultural and social service organizations, faith-based groups, government entities, corporations, and foundations.





## Vermont Symphony Orchestra Partners

Between 2010-12, the VSO's more than 300 partners included the following cultural and social service organizations, faith-based groups, government entities, corporations/foundations, colleges/universities, and schools:

### **CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Barre Opera House  
Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, Inc.  
Burlington City Arts  
Champlain Valley Exposition  
Chandler Music Hall  
Flynn Center for the Performing Arts  
Haskell Opera House  
Henry Sheldon Museum, The  
Hildene  
Paramount Center, Inc.  
Pentangle Council on the Arts  
Shelburne Farms  
Shelburne Museum  
Stowe Performing Arts  
Tunbridge World's Fair  
Vergennes Opera House  
Vermont Youth Orchestra Association

### **SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

Boys and Girls Club of Brandon  
Castleton Community Center  
Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf  
Our Place Drop In Center  
Pownal Headstart  
Rutland Food Shelf

### **FAITH-BASED GROUPS**

Brandon Congregational Church  
First Congregational Church  
Grace Church & Little Lambs  
Salisbury Congregational Church  
Warren United Church  
White Church, The

### **GOVERNMENT ENTITIES**

City of Bellows Falls  
South Burlington Library  
Town of Stowe  
Vermont State House

### **CORPORATIONS OR FOUNDATIONS**

Gardener's Supply  
Heritage Flight Aviation  
Higher Ground  
Jay Peak Resort  
Lodge at Shelburne Bay Senior Living Community  
Mountain Top Inn  
New England Federal Credit Union  
Oak Hill Children's Center  
Quechee Lakes Landowners Association  
Seven Days  
Sugarbush Resort  
Suicide Six Ski Area  
Three Stallion Inn  
Trapp Family Lodge  
Vermont Festivals, LLC  
Wake Robin  
Windham Foundation  
Woodstock Inn.

### **COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

Castleton State College  
Johnson State College  
Lakefield College School  
Lyndon State College  
Middlebury College  
St. Michael's College  
University of Vermont

### **SCHOOLS**

Academy School  
Addison Central School  
Albany Community School  
Albert Bridge School  
Alburgh Elementary School  
Allen Brook School  
Arlington Middle School  
Athens/Grafton Elementary  
Bakersfield Elementary  
Barnard Academy

Barnet Elementary  
Barre City Elementary  
Barre Town Elementary  
Barstow Memorial School  
Barton Graded School  
Beeman Elementary  
Bellows Falls Central School  
Bellows Falls Middle & High Schools  
Bellows Free Academy Fairfax  
Bellows Free Academy-St. Albans  
Bennington Elementary  
Benson Village School  
Berkshire Elementary School  
Berlin Elementary School  
Bernice Ray Elementary  
Bethel Elementary School  
Bingham Memorial School  
Bishop Marshall School  
Blue Mountain Union School  
Bradford Academy  
Braintree Elementary  
Brewster Pierce Elementary  
Bridge School  
Bridgewater Village School  
Bridport Central School  
Brighton Elementary  
Bristol Elementary  
Brookfield Elementary  
Brookline Elementary School  
Brownington Central School  
Burke Town School  
Burr and Burton Academy  
Cabot Elementary  
Calais Elementary School  
Cambridge Elementary  
Castleton Elementary School  
Cavendish Town Elementary School  
Chamberlin Elementary  
Champlain College  
Champlain Elementary School

## Vermont Symphony Orchestra Partners *(continued)*

Champlain Valley Christian	Grafton/Athens Contract School	Mid-Vermont Christian School
Champlain Valley Union High School	Grammar School, The	Miller's Run Elementary
Charleston Elementary	Grand Isle Elementary	Milton Elementary
Charlotte Central School	Green Street	Missisquoi Valley Union High School
Chelsea Elementary School	Guilford Central School	Molly Stark Elementary
Chester-Andover Elementary	Halifax Elementary	Monkton Central School
Christ the King School	Hardwick Elementary	Montgomery Elementary School
Clarendon Elementary	Hartford High School	Monument Elementary
Concord Graded School	Hartland Elementary School	Moretown Elementary
Coventry Village School	Hazen Union Middle/High School	Morristown Elementary
CP Smith Elementary	Hiawatha Elementary	Mount Abraham Union High School
Craftsbury School	Highgate Elementary	Mt. Holly Elementary
Crossett Brook Middle School	Hinesburg Community School	N. Bennington Graded School
Currier Memorial	Hunt Middle School	Neshobe Elementary School
Danville Elementary	Hyde Park Elementary	Newbrook School
Danville High School	Integrated Arts Academy at HO Wheeler	Newbury Elementary
Deerfield Elementary	Irasburg Village School	Newport City Elementary
Derby Elementary	Jamaica Village School	Newport Town School
Dothan Brook School	Jay/Westfield Elementary	Newton Elementary
Doty Memorial School	Jericho Elementary	North Country Junior High School
Dover Elementary	JFK Elementary	North Country Union High School
Dummerston Elementary	JJ Flynn Elementary	North Hero Elementary
E Taylor Hatton School	Johnson Elementary School	Northfield Elementary
E. Montpelier Elementary School	Killington Elementary School	Oak Grove Elementary
Eden Central School	Lake Region Union High School	Orchard Valley Waldorf School
Edmunds Elementary/Middle School	Lakeview Union Elementary	Orleans Elementary
Elm Hill Elementary	Lamoille Union High School	Orwell Village School
Enosburg Falls Elementary	Lawrence Barnes School	Ottawaquechee Elementary
Essex Elementary School	Lawrence School for Young Children	Peacham Elementary
Essex Middle School	Leicester Central School	Pomfret Elementary
Fair Haven Grade School	Lincoln Community School	Porter's Point School
Fairfield Center School	Lothrop Elementary School	Poultney Elementary
Fairfield Elementary	Lowell Graded School	Pownal Elementary
Fayston Elementary	Ludlow Elementary	Proctor Elementary School
Ferrisburgh Central School	Lyndon Institute	Proctor High School
Fisher Elementary School	Lyndon Town School	Putney Central School
Fletcher Elementary	Malletts Bay Elementary	Randolph Elementary School
Folsom Educational Center	Manchester Elementary/Middle	Randolph Union High School
Franklin Central School	Marion Cross Elementary	Renaissance School
Frederick Tuttle Middle School	Marlboro Elementary School	Richford Elementary
Georgia Elementary School	Mary Hogan Elementary	Richmond Elementary
Gilman Middle School	Mettawee Community School	Richmond School
Glover Community School	Middletown Springs Elementary	Rick Marcotte Central School

## Vermont Symphony Orchestra Partners (*continued*)

Ripton Elementary School	Sunderland Elementary	Winooski Middle School
Rivendell Academy	Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes	Wolcott Elementary School
Riverside Middle School	Sutton Village School	Woodbury Elementary School
Robinson Elementary	Swanton Central	Woodford Hollow School
Rochester School	Thatcher Brook Elementary	Woodstock Elementary School
Rock Point School	Thetford Elementary	Woodstock Union High School
Rockingham Central School	Thomas Fleming Elementary	
Roxbury Village School	Tinmouth Elementary School	
Rumney Elementary	Townshend Village School	
Rutland Intermediate School	Townshend Village School	
Rutland Middle School	Troy Elementary	
Rutland Northeast Primary School	Tunbridge Central School	
Rutland Northwest Primary	Twinfield Union Elementary	
Rutland Town School	Underhill Central School	
S. Royalton Elementary	Underhill ID Elementary	
Salisbury Community School	Union Elementary School	
Samuel Morey Elementary School	Union Memorial School	
Saxtons River Elementary	Union Street School	
Shaftsbury Elementary	United Christian Academy	
Sharon Elementary	Vergennes Union Elementary School	
Shelburne Community School	Vergennes Union High School	
Sheldon Elementary	Vernon Elementary School	
Sherburne Elementary	Waits River Valley Elementary	
Shoreham Elementary School	Waitsfield Elementary School	
Shrewsbury Mountain School	Walden Elementary School	
Smilie Memorial School	Wallingford Village School	
South Royalton Elementary	Wardsboro Elementary	
Springfield High School	Warren Elementary	
St. Albans City School	Washington Village School	
St. Albans Town School	Waterford Elementary	
St. Francis Xavier School	Waterville Elementary	
St. Johnsbury Academy	Weathersfield School	
St. Johnsbury Schools	Websterville Baptist Christian	
St. Mary's School	Wells Village School	
St. Paul's School	West Rutland Elementary	
St. Pius HomeSchool	Westford Elementary	
Stamford Elementary School	Westminster Center School	
Stockbridge Central School	Westshire Elementary	
Stowe Elementary School	Weybridge Elementary	
Stowe High School	Whitingham Elementary	
Sudbury's Country School	Williamstown Elementary	
Summit Street School	Williston Central School	

Last year, I spoke about the “life-blood” of any non-profit. Indeed, this might extend to any business, including state government. I refer to the four Rs: **regular**, **reliable**, **repeatable** revenue. At the VSO, we have been fortunate in recent years to sustain reliable revenues through our expanded endowment transfer. Using a conservative draw equal to 4% of a rolling 12-quarter average, we anticipate receiving more than 11% of our operating revenues next season from this source. Our annual appropriation from the Vermont legislature also qualifies as a reliable revenue stream, as do ticket sales, and individual contributions. What has become less reliable very recently is support from the business community and from private foundations. With rapidly changing philanthropic and marketing-targeted dollars, the performing arts has been left out where opportunities used to abound. Last October, we were informed that one major Vermont-based company that had supported *SymphonyKids* annually with five-figure gifts had narrowed its giving focus to two areas: sustainable food systems and clean water. While this may work for that company’s strategic positioning purposes, it not only leaves the arts “high and dry,” but also many other worthy human services charities. And where does the VSO go to replace that significant gift?

Two years ago, the VSO offered to use any new funds appropriated in our line item to provide free concert tickets for families who would otherwise be unable to attend because of financial barriers. We are pleased to report that over 800 people received free tickets last season, including 370 members of the Vermont National Guard and their families with whom we celebrated the holidays at our Holiday Pops concert in Burlington.

In a world filled with a desire for instant gratification, discount store prices and quality, sensational news headlines, international political turmoil and conflict, there has never been a more critical time for the perspective classical music can provide. Beethoven remains relevant today, as do his buddies, Bach, Brahms, Bernstein, Berlioz, Bartok, Bussoni,...I could go on all day and stay just in the Bs! The point is, I passionately believe the VSO plays a unique and basic role in our society here in Vermont, and it should not be taken for granted.

We are grateful for the Governor's recommendation for our 2016 line item at a level equal to the post-rescission 2015 amount. We hope that you will agree with this recommendation. Thank you once again for your support and your deliberation of this year's appropriation. I welcome your reactions and questions.



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