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Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Receives \$1.5-million Challenge Grant to Help Build the Stella Boyle Smith Music Center

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – The [Arkansas Symphony Orchestra](#) (ASO), which performs more than sixty concerts and provides music education to over 30,000 school children each year, has received a \$1.5-million two-to-one challenge grant from the Windgate Foundation to help build the future ASO [Stella Boyle Smith Music Center](#). The generous grant from the Windgate Foundation plus the \$3-million in matching donations ASO will need to raise by April 2023 will move the non-profit organization \$4.5-million to its goal and allow it to break ground on the new community music center.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Windgate Foundation for giving us this opportunity not only to make this music center a reality, but also to come together as a community and do it together,” said ASO CEO Christina Littlejohn. “This truly is a community music center to serve our youth, school students and Arkansans across the state so that we can both inspire and be inspired by music.”

Planned for development in the heart of Little Rock’s East Village between Heifer International and the Clinton Presidential Center, the Stella Boyle Smith Music Center will be a new state of the art, 20,000 square foot community music center. Announced in January, the project will greatly expand ASO’s capacity to serve Arkansas children through outstanding education programming and provide all residents with extensive musical offerings. The center will include a Grand Hall for rehearsals and concerts, multiple practice spaces, music classrooms, climate-controlled instrument storage, a dedicated streaming studio and additional flexible space to serve future generations of Arkansans.

Thanks to the generous support of donors so far, including leading gifts from the Stella Boyle Smith Trust, State of Arkansas and Simmons Bank, ASO is currently 60% of the way to its fundraising goal. Now advocates and supporters of ASO’s mission to connect, enrich, inspire and advance Arkansas through the power of music are calling on fellow Arkansans to lend their support and help raise the \$3-million in matching donations to meet the \$1.5-million challenge from the Windgate Foundation.

To learn more about the new ASO community music center and how individuals or groups can help make it possible to expand ASO's impact on the community, visit:

www.arkansassymphony.org/music-center

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

Design renders for the future Stella Boyle Smith Music Center:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EyBv0PYOvfJfBjoT4SF1Bms5pRMIzRI?usp=sharing>

About Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 56th full season in 2021-2022. ASO is the resident orchestra of Robinson Center Music Hall. Arkansas Symphony Orchestra performs more than sixty concerts each year for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, Acxiom Pops Live! Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, and numerous concerts performed around the state of Arkansas, in addition to serving central Arkansas through numerous community outreach programs and bringing live symphonic music education to over 30,000 school children and over 200 schools. ASO's education programs include the Sturgis Music Academy, which provides violin and cello instruction to more than 350 students, and the ASO Youth Ensembles Program, which has nearly 200 students enrolled in two full orchestras and a strings-only ensemble. In 2022, ASO released the world-premiere recording of groundbreaking African American composer and Little Rock-native Florence Price's own orchestration of her "Piano Concerto in One Movement." ASO employs 12 full-time musicians, more than 70 part-time musicians and 15 administrative staff members with an annual operating budget of \$3.5 million. Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is a member of the League of American Orchestras and a partner orchestra of the National Alliance for Audition Support, an unprecedented national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras.

For more information about the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra call 501-666-1761 or visit www.ArkansasSymphony.org

Program notes, artist bios and high-resolution headshots available upon request.

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